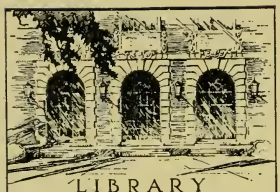

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THE

MILITIA MAJOR.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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PREFACE

At a time when the startling question is asked, not only by our legislature, but by the enlightened and humane throughout civilised Europe—echoed back from the far west—"why it is, that Ireland, with her thousand advantages should still be steeped in poverty and crime?" The writer of these unpretending pages, claims indulgence from a philanthrophic public, for attempting to embody, in a tale of fiction, some leading facts connected with the "Social System" that has plunged this unhappy land in all the barbarism of moral evil, beat back from her shores English capital, and Scottish enterprise, whilst her own in-

dustrial energies lie paralysed and collapsed; an unexplained anomaly to other countries; and "a difficulty" to the profoundest statesmen of her own. Fertile in her internal resources; possessing the advantages of soil and situation, for commercial prosperity; with an abundant population, admittedly not devoid of intellect; yet exhibited in our own day, as a vast pauper house seeking almony from the land whose people she has fed with her grain, whose ports have been filled with her produce; too poor herself, to retain sufficient for the necessary, but disregarded purposes of a home consumption. No party spirit induced the task, but a fervent desire to rouse into action the dawning promise of kindlier feelings amongst us; convey, by an imaginative illustration of characters, but not of circumstances, this wholesome truth to the landed interest, and destitute peasant—that a people's prosperity and strength,

necessarily grow out of impartial laws, and unshaken confidence in those who administer them—a reciprocity of good faith and good feeling between the *governing* and *governed;* then, when the former moralise over the social misery and agrarian outrage of Irishmen, they will, in tracing the *effect*, with the writer of this "o'er true story," pause to investigate the *cause;* and in this reforming age, we trust, regardless of class, creed, or party, apply the remedy.

January 16th, 1852.

THE

MILITIA MAJOR

OR THE

SOCIAL SYSTEM IN TIPPERARY.

CHAPTER I.

PRESENT AND PAST.

It was the evening of Agnes Power's first ball, somewhere about the Summer of 18— Few young ladies of seventeen can contemplate such an event with stoical indifference, and it was hailed, by Agnes, with all the rapture which the young, joyous heart feels, for the first time, when, catching a glimpse of that bright, fairy world, whose

dazzling illusions, a few short years, spent amongst its votaries, serve to dispel for ever. Her life, hitherto, had been one of unbroken solitude—the idol of a mother, whose delicacy of constitution, and extreme timidity of disposition, kept aloof from the busy throng; whilst her father, Major Power, had too many, and too varied occupations to permit his noticing or bringing forward his only child; so that Agnes may be said to have been brought up in the shade of a mother's love, her only other companion being her cousin, Amy O'Brien, two years her senior, and who shared alike her joys and sorrows from childhood. And now they stood beneath the flood of light that issued from the central chandelier of the drawing-room of Drumgar—Agnes with her arm locked in that of Amy—her slight, sylph-like figure clinging, as if for support, to that of her cousin. The bright azure of her undimmed eyes, like the mountain lakes of her own sunny land; the half parted lip, with its row of pearls

beneath ; the rich wavy curls, their hue of the palest gold, shading her beautiful but almost child-like brow, would have formed a study for a painter ; but a statuary would have turned to her cousin, and chiselled his model from the small classical head—the calm, intellectual, and thoughtful brow—the slightly curved lip—the clear, but almost colourless cheek—save when emotion tinged it with its varying dye—the noble proportion of the swan-like throat, only equalled by the exquisitely formed bust—the slight yielding figure of early girlhood, full of life and promise; like the heroine of Byron's dream. She now stood "as the moon on the verge of the horizon" on the very eve of womanhood.

Hers had been a joyless youth—an orphan from her birth—circumstances rather than choice flung her upon the bounty of Major Power. Her mother, who was his niece, relinquished her own life, in giving birth to her child, and her father, the last of a junior branch of the Thomond

family, possessed little save his sword, and the name his ancestors had won: that little, after her mother's death, he made over to his child, and, placing her under the care of her maternal uncle, sought active service in a foreign land, inwardly vowing that the innocent cause of the wreck of all his wedded happiness should never claim him as a parent.

When her uncle died, suddenly, Amy had been removed from her nurse's care; he had never married, and his father's younger brother now set up to be his heir; nor did Charles Power make any arrangement about his niece; so that Major Power, in taking possession of Drumgar, and its three thousand a year, had also to take under his protection Amy O'Brien, then about six years old. This he did, the more willingly, full well knowing, that if he gave up all claim to her guardianship, his own family, like most others, possessed some kind, meddling creature that would seize on the child, and by insisting on a refundment of the small property her

father had left, put him to very serious inconvenience; or, what was worse, set up and establish her claim, in right of her mother, to the property he now enjoyed; hitherto there had been very little danger of his purse expiring of plethora. He had served in the "Gallant Tipperary," and by some legerdemain, only known to the militia force, received a subaltern's half-pay, while he rejoiced in the *soubriquet* of major; he had attained the sober age of forty-three before he thought of sharing his honours, and his pay, with any of the gentler sex. And then, with all the habits and tastes of an old bachelor, suddenly formed the resolution of marrying a very lovely and gentle being of less than half his own age; he was partly led to this by receiving a hint from a friend, that the lady was entitled to five thousand pounds of funded money, left her by some relative; and partly by admiration, at witnessing the submission of Miss Radcliffe to the heartless tyranny of

a step-mother; tyranny as absolute as that of Eastern Bashaw, as unquestioned as the Lousianest by his *Nigger*. Not that the sufferings of the victim ever awoke a feeling of sympathy in the breast of her gallant admirer; far from it; he only reasoned, that the girl who, from infancy, had been accustomed to submit, without a murmur, to the despotism of an ill-tempered woman, would not be likely, in her wedded life, to question the authority of her lord and master.

On this hypothesis he proposed,, and with a feeling, on her part, that no change could be for the worse, was joyfully accepted—if joy could be said to dwell in the breast of one whose feelings had been crushed from her infancy—whose young heart had been trampled on by the unprovoked tyranny of the woman who sat in her mother's chair; was called by her mother's name, the wife of her father—yet regarding his child with but one feeling—that of jealous hate.

The Major's fortune, as a Benedict, was not very ample; but "economy is the life of the army." And he very wisely thought, a militia half-pay was fully entitled to quarter it; with his motto, it is true, his wife's health, in after years, suffered sadly, from the effects of the rigid regimen prescribed by the Major, for his household, at this time, but he was too strict a disciplinarian to relax, in the slightest degree, what he considered expedient, for any inconvenience, or ill health, she might suffer. Woman—even lovely woman—was but a very secondary being with him, in the scale of creation; deeming her suited by nature to hold some place in the domestic economy similar to that of the household cat, her best recommendation, a noiseless step, her highest qualification, an unremitting attention to preserve the property of her owner from the human plunderers of his establishment. Mrs. Power proved a very passive sort of

wife ; the sovereign will of her spouse, was as absolute to her as the law of the Medes and Persians; and as unquestioned as the truth of the Koran by the devoutest Mussulman that ever bent knee at Mecca. The Major, in plain English, had his *own way;* he, at times, indulged in a taste common to military men, retired from the service, that of shifting his abode, as if the rout of by-gone days had actually arrived; migrating, in this manner, for some years, converting each house he occupied into something like the interior of a river steam-boat, modelling each news-room, he subscribed to, according to his own taste. and whim.

At length, he took possession of Drumgar, at the death of his nephew, and a different order of things was then introduced: he became a magistrate, and grand juror of the county, establishing a reading-room, at the postmaster's house, at Ballyvoyle, the nearest village to Drumgar ; a loan fund, and savings' bank, of all which

he was the chief manager ; and by ingeniously levying a number of fines at the lending society, contrived to increase his income considerably.

A petit sessions court was the next thing that engaged his attention; without local authority he would have found it difficult to manage matters ; and the nearest bench of magistrates, was some eight or ten miles from Drumgar ; and, on more occasions than one, he had found they did not exactly coincide in his views ; besides, he was particularly averse to the mode the peasantry were in the habit of arranging their differences—by arbitration amongst themselves—sometimes calling in the aid of the neighbouring gentry—and not, unfrequently, that of the rector of Ballyvoyle—but the major would have none of these things ; he sat down and wrote a very strong letter to government, representing the lawless state of the district ; magnifying the distance from the nearest town petit

sessions were held at, enclosing, at the same time, a copy of every Rockite notice that had been served for the last twelve months in the neighbourhood, with the simple alteration of dating them within a fortnight of that of his own letter. A few posts after brought the commission of the peace to the agent of an absentee peer, with an order to establish forthwith, a petit sessions court at Ballyvoyle.

Year after year—court day after court day—found the claimants for justice discontented with the decrees and decisions of the Major and his colleague—the latter, too much immersed in his own private affairs, and those of his employer, to interfere with his brother magistrate's management of the business of the public—these secret discontents, at length, broke out in murmurs, when the bench decreed a man of the name of Sweeney, who went security to the Loan Fund at Ballyvoyle, for atenant of Major Power's, whose land had run

deeply in arrear, and who was compelled to raise money at the bank to enable him to pay his landlord—the Major not permitting him to sell his interest in the ground, until all arrears were paid in full—Larry Costelloe had set his heart on visiting America; and there were private reasons for his doing so. Amongst the number of those who were most anxious to see him commence his voyage thither was his landlord, and so get a bad boy out of the country. Now, Larry was not held in sufficient odour amongst his neighbours to succeed in prevailing on any of them to go security at the bank; and he, in despair, waited on the Major to say he had met a plump denial from all. That wily personage, no way daunted with Larry's bad success, turned over in his mind which of the small farmers in the neighbourhood, that were solvent, could be most readily induced to sign Larry's security; and when that worthy ran away to America (as his landlord well knew he would), which of them would bear

the seizure of their worldly goods with most composure; and, above all, which of them belonged to no Faction. Any man that had a strong party, at his back, the Major was determined to avoid meddling with, on this occasion, so, after a brief consultation with Sergeant Wetherell,—his own man—they both unanimously decided on Martin Sweeney. He and his forefathers had held a small piece of land, of about fifteen acres, from the Power family, and were considered to have some interest in the holding, a thing the Major was much averse to any of his tenantry possessing; Sweeney's father had died whilst he was quite a boy, and after fortuning off his sisters, and giving a trade to his only brother, he found himself rich enough to marry the prettiest and tidiest girl in the parish. The young couple loved each other fondly, and prized their home more than Fair or Patron; so that Martin had never joined any of the lawless factions in the neighbourhood; and it was this circumstance, and his quiet, obliging manner, that

now pointed him out as a victim to his landlord. Sergeant Wetherell took on himself to get Sweeney to sign the security, and, unfortunately for the wretched man, he succeeded. Some weeks had elasped, in which Costelloe sold his farm, and was himself on his way to America, the note of security became due, and Martin Sweeney was decreed by the Bench at Ballyvoyle; his landlord, and Mr. Gibbon, the agent, sitting in judgment.

When the awful decree of ruin was pronounced against him, by these gentlemen, he dared to murmur before the seat of justice, and was ordered forthwith to the Bridewell—released from durance vile, he remonstrated outside the window of the Major's study, at Drumgar, and distinctly heard an order given to Dan Wetherell, "to let the dogs loose on the miscreant, who had dared to beard him at his own fire-side." The order was promptly obeyed; for Dan never questioned those of the Major; he had been successively his servant and his

sergeant in the "Gallant Tipperary," and now, that he had sheathed his sword, filled no less than three posts of honour at Ballyvoyle, that of clerk to the Petit Sessions, Savings' Bank, and Loan Fund, besides being the Major's *factotum* at Drumgar.

CHAPTER II.

IRISH REASONS FOR A BALL.

THE Irish peasant is peculiarly tenacious of legal right; you may baffle him in one court of justice, but he will lodge his *appale*, if at all within his power. The suppliant, at the study window, though obliged to retire at the appearance of Dan and the dogs, did not consider his case hopeless.

The last gleam of the setting sun tinged the bold heights of the Galties, the smoke rose upwards in thin, voluminous clouds from the cabin chimnies of the hamlet below; the evening meal was laid on the peat fire, and around it sat the sons of toil, —the reckless laugh, that was wont to issue

from the fire-side, where *Shanahus* was held, now was hushed; they spoke in a subdued tone of the *doins'* of the Major; and Corny Mac Carthy, the village school-master, deliberately withdrawing the black *dhudheen* from his mouth, that he had been enjoying for some time, holding it between his right hand finger and thumb, while he propelled the collected juice in his sunken jaws, straight under the pot of potatoes that simmered on the fire, declared—

"Before God, an' the blessid Vargin, that it was both conthrary to law an Gospil."

"An' if id be Corny," said Jim Sullivan, a neighbouring boy, "what hindhers you frum bringin' the Major to rason; sure we all know, man, that ye'er more than a match fur him, or fur the Lord Liftinnant himself."

Corny elevated his eyebrows, until their long, grey hairs, almost mingled with the grizzled forelock that ornamented his forehead; and drawing in his thin, hollow

jaws, until they nearly formed but one, emitted a sound from his pursed-out lips, that spoke his opinion on the subject, in much stronger language, than any embodied words could possibly convey.

The pot on the fire now claimed the attention of the woman of the house; and its straining into the huge *skeeagh*, prepared for its contents, was the signal for the party to break up. The etiquette on those occasions in an Irish cabin is scrupulously observed; and on the present one, before the potatoes were deposited on the table, all were in motion towards the door.

"Good night to ye, and a pleasant appetite to ye," said Corny Mac Carthy, as he moved off from the fire; then sinking his voice lower, so as to be heard only by the man next him, after he crossed the threshold, said, "Jim Sullivan, come over to me in the mornin', before the school assembles, and may be, I won't be afther

havin a *Kinnundhrum,* ready fur the Major."

Whether Mr. Corny Mac. Carthy's connundrum had anything to do with a very civil notice, that appeared the morning after but one, on the hall door of Drumgar, requesting the master of the mansion to refrain from attending the Bench at Ballyvoyle, for the future; unless he had prepared the original of a black, oblong, sort of drawing, that decorated the bottom of the missive, I leave the gentle reader to discover; certain it was that Sergeant Wetherell was not forgotten, the *Noty Beny* giving a friendly hint to "Wan Dan Witherill not to be showin' ov himsilf, much afther sunset, or may be the dogs wouldn't be afther knowin him, whin nixt his masther ordher'd thim out."

This notice, with its accompanying illustration, which by-the-bye, conveyed to the Major what it was intended to represent, quite as vividly as any portrait,

sketched by Sir Peter Lely, or the Lawrence of our own days, was duly forwarded to Government, with a very exaggerated account of the insurrectionary, state of the neighbourhood, and a pressing application for troops, to protect the civil power in putting down the midnight meetings and Rockite spirit of the peasantry. Before the close of the ensuing week a large detachment of the 5—th regiment, stationed at Tipperary, marched into Ballyvoyle and took possession of the very strange accommodation provided for them by the indefatigable major. It was to propitiate the officers of this corps, and reconcile them, in some degree, to the hardships of their new quarters, that a *fete* at Drumgar had been projected—the original intention was a dinner with some *show* of champagne—but the Major remembered that, at the next assizes, he had a road job to carry before the grand jury ; and that, perhaps it was quite as well not to entertain a military party without extending the invitation

to the wives and daughters of the men whose opposition he so much dreaded. In this emergency he called to his councils the only one of womankind that had ever been admitted to that honor ; this was the eldest sister of Mrs. Power, and her senior by many years. She had early escaped the bondage of her step-mother by marrying the late Mr. O'Brady, of Kilgroggy House, whose sober hours were "few and far between ; and, by the death of that gentleman, some seven or eight years before the date of this story, was left in the quiet enjoyment of a jointure of six hundred a-year, three charming daughters, and the guardianship of an only son, who, at his father's demise, wanted two years of his majority. The young gentleman was so ungrateful, and approved so little of his mama's mode of managing his property during these two years, that, on coming of age, he very plainly intimated his wish to enjoy Kilgroggy alone, and manage his own affairs for the future. There was no mistaking his

meaning ; so, both mother and sisters had nothing for it but to pack up; the three latter rejoicing at the prospect of shewing themselves to advantage at some country town. The former, intent upon making a very Napoleon-like distribution of the house, linen and plate ; for, whose ever claims were overlooked upon the occasion, it certainly could not be said to be those of number *one*.

Nick O'Brady, in the meantime, enjoyed Kilgroggy, and its nominal fifteen hundred a-year, in true bachelor style ; deeply dipped as the property was at his father's death his son contrived, in less than five years after attaining his majority, to more than double the debts then contracted. Out of any ready money that was at all come-at-able, his mother contrived to have her own jointure paid, and the interest of each of his sisters' two thousand pounds—the principal was quite out of the question—but ready money and Nick O'Brady had, for some time, become, each day, less and less acquainted ;

and might now be fairly said to have fallen out; so, though a thing to be expected, yet a *latitat*, at the suit of his mother, handed to Nick one morning, found him quite unprepared to discharge the sum mentioned therein. He now took the matter into his serious consideration; to baffle it by the "law's delay;" he had found to his cost, before now, made a gentleman of his attorney, but left the client something worse than a beggar. There was left him but two alternatives, either to barricade Kilgroggy against a sheriff's siege, or induce the ladies to visit it—if he possibly could—with a promise of satisfying their demands; the former he could accomplish; but then, Nick knew well his mamma would at any time, sacrifice his liberty rather than lose a half year of her jointure; and he had a particular objection to being laid up at Kilgroggy, during the siege, for an indefinite space of time. So he determined upon trying the latter expedient—fortunately for him—the detachment to Bally-

voyle just arrived at this crisis; and the brilliant thought suggested itself that, if he could set the four ladies in full cry after the officers, matters might be arranged; at all events, he would gain time by the movement—and would be nothing the worse for their coming.

A letter was written to Mrs. O'Brady, such as her son hoped would prove irresistible; and, in an incredibly short peried from the date thereof, she, and her three daughters were, once more, installed at Kilgroggy. The major hailed her coming as the harbinger of good—on former occasions she had proved to him a very useful ally; and, in the present emergency, her advice was not to be neglected; she boldly decided, at once, for a ball—dinner parties were heavy, stupid concerns, and the officers would find their own mess-table just as amusing, besides, a large dinner party was more expensive than a supper; then, there was the risk of giving offence by asking some, and leaving

out others—a thing that never was forgotten or forgiven, especially by the women, with the *eclat*, *et cetera* attending such an *affaire*, and the noise it would make in the country, and so forth. These and sundry other arguments, equally conclusive, were used by the lady, and the Major had nothing for it but to consent, making the proviso, that she would take the management of the affair into her own hands, and that not one penny should be expended, that, by any ingenuity on her part, could possibly be avoided. Her exertions, from that hour, to produce the most brilliant effects from the smallest expenditure, were truly meritorious, with a vast outlay of trouble on decoration, and a very slight sacrifice of provision. The supper-table presented a gay, inviting appearance enough. The house was one of those large rambling sort of domiciles, that had been modernized, extended, and, perhaps, improved, by its successive proprietors, for the last three or four generations, so that, if the architect who had

planned or executed the original building was now permitted to survey his handiwork, he would find some difficulty in discovering any part that had not been altered to gratify the tastes of its several owners. A building so incongruous was well suited to display the decorating genius of Mrs. O'Brady; for though every individual in and about Drumgar was pressed into the service, hers was the master mind that directed all. The long, narrow passages that literally led to nothing, and but dimly lighted in broad day-light, were now converted into galleries of refreshment—galleries *pour le promenade*—the white-washed walls gaily decorated with laurels, and tin sconces; while, in some retired, out-of-the-way nook, was placed, by the direction of the thoughtful mamma, one of those low, comfortable seats, which no man, after a champagne supper, at all in his senses, would think of occupying with his fair partner, surrounded, as it was, with laurels and tin sconces, the band of the

"Gallant Tipperary" playing all the while to fill up the pauses, unless he had previously made up his mind to throw himself and fortune at the lady's disposal.

Some such thoughts flitted across the mind of Mrs. O'Brady, as she admiringly contemplated her arrangement, and pointed out the *delightful seat* to her fair daughters, who had spared an hour from their dressmaker to take a peep at the admirable trap, designed by the maternal tactician, for some one or other of the doomed 5—th.

CHAPTER III.

THE BALL.

PEAL after peal told upon the knocker; Agnes and her cousin had sought a distant couch beside Mrs. Power, whose sister had kindly relieved her from the fatigue of doing the honours as *Maitresse de Maison*, and who now stood a short distance from the door, ready to greet each new arrival, in a style she considered very imposing; and which, the term, *dashing*, conveys an idea of, more nearly than any other; she was a tall, showy-looking woman, with a shrewd cast of countenance, over which was thrown the gloss of frank, good nature; mere surface, it is true, but enabling her

to conceal from the casual observer an utterly selfish and sordid mind. She now, all smiles, resplendent in black satin, bugles, and jet ornaments, surmounted by a very awful-looking turban and plume, shared the task of receiving, with the host, the numerous guests that poured in from all parts of the county, to witness and partake of the gaiety and festivity of Drumgar. An inexperienced statesman, new to office, would have received a very useful lesson, from witnessing her mode of receiving each new comer; from the careless, indifferent curtsey bestowed on a common-place acquaintance, the eye immediately withdrawn, to the cordial greeting of her manner, to Lady Glenmore, the she lion of the party, there were a dozen, intermediate modes of salutation which evinced the estimation each individual was held in by the lady, as plainly as if a herald's king at arms had announced their several pretensions, ere they passed the doorway; nor should the Major be forgotten all this time. His light

coloured wig, that took some ten years off his age, was curled to a nicety ; frizzed some two or three inches higher towards the crown of his head, than on ordinary occasions ; so that the five-feet-five he measured, in his high-heeled boots, when his *toupée* was undressed, was now increased to something more than five-feet-six and a half; unfortunately, it was at the wrong end of the Major, this increase of stature was effected; nature, in some frolic, had thought proper to curtail his legs, in a very marvellous degree, giving him a body in no way proportioned to his pins; when seated, you would have guessed his height at over six feet, but when on his legs, he was not unlike a scavenger's cart, dispossessed of its wheels, or the knave of clubs, in more senses than one.

Like most men, who have any peculiarity of figure, he was not at all aware of its existence, and on the present occasion walked and strutted about with a self-satisfied air, an Apollo might have envied.

He had on a dress coat, such as were sometimes worn by the disbanded officers of the "Gallant Tipperary," it was a dark, peculiar shade of green, its ample skirts lined with white silk; the initials corresponding to "Tipperary Fusiliers," raised in relief on its gaudy-looking button; a high black stock cut after a military fashion, decorated his neck, deeply contrasting his white Marseille waistcoat, in the pocket of which reposed a watch of no ordinary dimensions; its massive gold curb chain drawn across so as to rest in the third button-hole of the vest, from which was suspended a large bunch of seals, that kept the owner's fingers in active service, whilst he regaled his friends with those stories of flood and field, his being out with the Tipperary, had given him a legitimate right to inflict on any less favoured individual; besides this, his vest was decorated with a broad black ribbon, from which hung a tortoishell reading glass, mounted in silver; it swung about with a pendulum sort of motion, keep-

ing time to the very energetic action the Major was wont to use, in relating a favorite story; dark pantaloons, with Wellington boots, completed his outer man. The index to the inner was difficult to describe; it was a countenance that would have puzzled a physiognomist, and given years of study to Lavater; the high, ample forehead in no way harmonized with the quick furtive looking eye, that peered cunningly from beneath the lowering brow; the nose was straight and well formed; the expression of the mouth was that of broad humour —the facetious story teller revealed at a glance—still, about its corners, there lurked, at times, an expression of licence and cruelty, that marked its owner as a malicious, inveterate foe, not over scrupulous in using the means to accomplish a favorite object, but no such expression characterised it at the present moment, he was now all smiles and glee; the room was becoming full to overflowing; Sergeant Wetherell who acted as armourer, (a post of no slight

trust in Tipperary, on such occasions), stood in the Major's study, receiving sundry blunderbusses, pistols, dirks, cane swords, and night protectors, from gentlemen who wished to mingle in the dance, and would have found such warlike accoutrements, but awkward companions, though absolutely necessary ones in travelling from their own houses after sunset. The officers had not yet arrived, much to the mortification of sundry ladies, the Miss O'Bradys amongst the number, who thought the dance was doomed never to commence; for, as their mamma whispered to the sisters, "forming a tame quadrille without the red coats, would be much worse than not dancing at all," and acting on this opinion, the three young ladies took up their position so as to command a full view of the door, their attention, wide awake, to every announ ement of a fresh arrival, bawled out by the servant in the hall. This occupation however, they were not left unmolested to enjoy. Young gen-

tlemen in blue and black coats whose patent leather, low-cut shoes and tightly drawn silk stockings, announced as votaries of the dance, assailed their ears with many sly and witty allusions on the absence of the military, dwelling on the consequent disappointment of every woman in the room—and the Misses O'Brady in particular—requesting those ladies to withdraw their attention from the door, on the principle "that a watched pot never boils;" assuring them that, whilst they kept such a sharp look out, the expected heroes would, most certainly, never arrive; then others, more maliciously inclined, would hint the possibility that they were, at that moment, on *active* service—*still* hunting in Ballyseskin bog, or pursuing Captain Houlahan, the outlaw, through the fastnesses of the "Galties." A screaming announcement of unintelligible names at the door—the band of the "gallant Tipperary," stationed in the hall, striking up, "the Campbells are

coming," set all these tantalizing surmises at rest; and, in the full blaze of scarlet cloth and gold lace, the officers of the 5—th made their bow to Major Power—and were, by him, duly presented to the charming Mrs. O'Brady ; then came the arrangement for the opening quadrille—the Major had not danced for many years—in byegone days his *forte* had been the Irish jig; but, as this was a *solo* movement, at the commencement of the entertainment, it would not have appeared so well; thus the mantle of precedence, for the honour of leading off the first dance, fell, by universal consent, on the shoulders of Colonel Saville, the senior officer of the 5—th; in vain, did he plead that he very seldom danced, and was not particularly fond of the amusement—these objections were overruled by his host and Mrs. O'Brady ; and, before the colonel was aware of the movement, he found himself standing before Lady Glenmore ; Mrs. O'Brady earnestly soliciting

"*the* honour of her ladyship's hand for the colonel's special use for the next quadrille;" to retreat was impossible, so he made the best of his position, politely seconding the request of the lady, which was as politely rejected on the part of her ladyship, by coldly observing,

"That she never danced. The young lady by her side, perhaps, might do him the honour,"

The blush that mantled on the young lady's cheek, extending to her beautiful neck and brow, must have spoken consent, for no word was uttered; and the colonel, taking her hand, saying, at the same time,

"We must not keep them waiting," quietly drew it within his arm, and the next moment Colonel Saville and Agnes Power were moving towards the head of the room; only the very young, and those who have never been considered of any importance in the family circle, can at all understand the feelings of Agnes, as she stood at the head of the quadrille, with Colonel

Saville as a partner ; in all the preparations for the ball, that of a partner for Agnes had not been overlooked by her Aunt O'Brady.

"Her son Nick," she said, "should dance one set with her, just to keep her from sitting all night."

And with this arrangement, was her niece quite content, so far as regarded herself, but extremely anxious that her cousin Amy should enjoy more than *one* dance for the night ; and now finding herself in a position so unexpected, the room swam around her ; she felt every eye in it was fixed on herself, and she dared not raise hers to the dark, soldierly-looking man that placed himself at her side, he regarded her with a look, such as a mother bestows on a frightened child ; and, addressing to her some common-place observation, spoken in that quiet, composed tone of voice most likely to reassure her, commenced the quadrille. For the first time, since her birth, her father now

regarded her with a look of admiration; he had heard around him, asked by many—"Who the very lovely girl was, that led off the first dance?" and more than one, whose good opinion he prized, had complimented him on the beauty and elegance of his daughter. Poor people! they followed the common error, that an only child must needs be a favourite one—not considering, that indulged passions supply the place of natural ties, and that we hug them to our bosoms with a love passing the love of parent—aye, even that of woman.

Her Aunt O'Brady, however, looked on her with a very different feeling. She felt as if a mine had sprung beneath her, Agnes was no more a child, she had witnessed the Colonel's manner, in asking her to dance, and from that moment regarded him as the rival of her son, whom the wily mother had long since determined should wed the heiress of Drumgar, and thus be enabled to pay her jointure, and clear off his sisters' fortunes; those young ladies she took care, on the present oc-

casion, should not be disappointed in military beaux. The two elder ones profited by her good management; Lucy, the youngest, before the officers arrived, had been engaged *contre gre* for the first dance; she would willingly have forgotten the engagement, "when the honour of dancing the first set," was addressed to her by Captain Grant of the 5—th.; but, unfortunately, her promised partner's eye was fixed on Lucy at this moment, and the look of regret, with which she announced her engagement for the dance, could only be equalled by the disappointment depicted on the countenance of him upon whom she bestowed her reluctant hand; the chosen friend of her brother, and chosen lover of her own, before Lucy had left Kilgroggy, and enlarged her ideas of men and things by attending subscription balls in county towns, and *pic-nics* at the sea-side; these entertainments did not at all raise Frank Mandeville in Lucy's estimation—

"Comparisons are odious!" And so

found poor Frank, to his cost, when Lucy returned to Kilgroggy. The careless shooting jacket, with the handle of a *dhudeen* projecting from its pocket, the untrimmed whisker, and mop-like hair, that ornamented a very handsome though sun-burnt face, were things the lady could not endure after the smart and well-cared-for beaux she had left behind—none of them, it is true, had loved her as Frank Mandeville did—but what cared Lucy! the uncle, whose property was one day to be his, was living, and, in the meantime, she had made up her mind not to think of him, until all chance of better was out of the question.

Not so Frank, he still loved her as much as when children they went to gather nuts in the wood of Scorrow, or years afterwards when she walked ankle deep in the bog of Kilgroggy, watching him and her brother, bringing down snipes for supper, when Frank was sure to have a seat by her side. It was the memory of those days that caused him now to ask her to dance, and

with a feeling, near akin to hatred, was he accepted by his quondam lover. Her attention was, in no way, bestowed on her partner during the quadrille; it was entirely engrossed in envying her sisters their good fortune in having officers for partners, and watching Agnes and the colonel, who had finished their part of the dance, and were now standing speaking to each other; the former with her colour still heightened, a fawn-like expression of timidity in her mild, lustrous eyes, whenever she encountered the calm but brilliant glances of his. He stooped as he addressed her, as if the words he uttered were intended for her alone; and whatever those words might be, they seemed to have re-assured Agnes; for, ere the dance was finished, she had spoken to him as one she had known for years; and offered no objection to his leading her to an opposite room, where the dancers were pouring in to enjoy a cooler atmosphere; and here, seated on a couch, Colonel Saville contemplated the beautiful being

beside him, and listened to the low, musical notes of the softest voice he had ever heard, confess with a *naivete* that was irresistible, " that it was the first crowded room she had ever been in, and that he was the first stranger with whom she had ever danced."

His eyes, perhaps, conveyed how he appreciated the good fortune ; but he did not frighten the little beauty with a speech, but sought rather to lead her to speak of herself, and how her time, hitherto, had been occupied ; he then discovered that she was not the daughter of Lady Glenmore, as he had supposed ; and as Agnes said nothing to lead him to guess who she really was, he felt a degree of curiosity on the subject which surprised himself. He did not even know her name ; but as he gazed on the fairy proportion of her hand, and the aristocratic cast of her features, he felt confident she came of no plebeian race. Saville knew human nature well, and at a glance, he seemed to understand

the character of Agnes ; he felt, that by asking her a question in this early stage of their acquaintance, in order to discover who she really was, he would embarrass, and shock a timid nature, such as hers, at finding herself conversing familiarly with a gentleman who was a stranger to her name. The Colonel refrained then from making any such enquiry, and was leading her on from subject to subject, discovering she possessed a refined, cultivated mind, as well as the most ingenuous one he had ever met, when her aunt O'Brady bustled into the room, advanced to where they sat, and addressing Agnes, said,

"Here is Nick to dance the next quadrille with you ; so you had better come into the dancing-room, and not treat him in the way you did the last."

Agnes started ; murmured something about not remembering any engagement, and was hurried away by her aunt before the Colonel, even if he had so wished, could interfere. Nick O'Brady, at the

special request of his mother, placed her amongst the side couples of the quadrille ; and when she raised her eyes, after being huddled into a space, which even her slight figure had not room enough to stand in without jostling or being jostled by her neighbour, she made the joyful discovery that Amy O'Brian was her *vis-a-vis* ; their eyes met—the cousins interchanged a look of congratulation—Agnes saw no more ; for, at this moment, a large, heavy-looking young man, that stood next her, in making room for his partner, pushed her completely into the back ground; whilst hers was too much occupied in betting on the merits of a black setter, with a gentleman to his left, to take any notice of what had become of his ; towards the close of the set, Nick remembered something about Agnes ; and, turning round to look, discovered her quietly seated on a form at some distance. It was now her turn to dance ; and, as she took her place and advanced, her eyes met those

of Colonel Saville; and their hands, the next moment in turning her in the quadrille—he had been her cousin's partner and her own *vis-a-vis*—and now reproached her for deserting him during the set. Agnes replied only by a smile, such as the young, joyous brow, alone can wear, when the lips cheeks and eyes all smile together, ere care or worldliness has stamped its iron impress, glanced a look towards her partner as the cause of her delinquency, and glided back to her place with a step that would not dispel a dew-drop, or "crush a hare-bell," beneath its fairy tread,

The dance ended; and Nick O'Brady, who looked upon her as a child, brought her to a seat next to that occupied by his mother. That lady was too much engaged just then to deliver a lecture she had promised, in her own mind, to bestow on Agnes, for leading off with the Colonel, but contented herself with glancing at her a look, which very plainly intimated that she might be certain of receiving it the very first opportunity.

Waltzing then commenced ; none of those dull, tame waltzes, where half-a-dozen couple revolve round a large room, but a whirling, twirling sort of movement, where twenty or thirty come right bang against each other in one of moderate dimensions. The Misses O'Brady were untiring waltzers; and their mamma had now the satisfaction of seeing their ballooned skirts propelled round and round the room—their waists encircled by an arm clad in the liveliest scarlet —their shoulders nearly dislocated by coming in contact with the " dear creatures'," epaulettes, as they swung round and round, to the soul vivifying air of " It's my delight of a zhiny night in the zezen of the year."

Mrs. O'Brady advanced to the verge of the outer circle to witness these active evolutions ; and Agnes took the opportunity of gliding round by the wall to gain, if possible, a seat next her mother; but, ere she had performed half her journey, Colonel Saville was by her side, enquiring—

"Could he, in any way, assist her."

Agnes pointed out the part of the room she was bound for; and, by much manœuvering on his part to escape clashing with the waltzers, at length, placed his fair charge beside Mrs. Power.

A glance at that lady decided they were mother and child; each feature had its counterpart in the other, allowing for the difference of some twenty years, but the countenances differed widely in expression; there was a look of quiet, resigned melancholy in that of Mrs. Power, that told she had endured much, and felt but apathy towards the future; whilst, on the brow of Agnes, there lay no shadow. The cherished one of her mother, unnoticed by her father, she had, hitherto, basked, like some beautiful insect amid summer flowers, in the sunshine of that mother's love; yet as little prepared to withstand the command, or gainsay the will of her other parent, as the gay butterfly, to resist the

first rude assault of the wintry blast, or spread its silken wings in defiance of the pitiless storm.

And now, seating herself between her mother and cousin, laying her hand on the arm of the former, whilst she raised her eyes, blushing at their own temerity, to Colonel Saville's face, said—

"This is mamma, who—who—am I to say, has been so kind as to bring me to her."

"My name is Saville," said the Colonel, bowing now to Mrs. Power.

The lady thanked him for taking charge of her daughter.

The gentleman made some remark on the danger of passing the waltzers, and drawing a chair near the sofa she occupied, commenced an animated conversation, which lasted until supper was announced; he then offered his arm to Mrs. Power, and his services to all, in taking charge of them to the supper-room.

This was declined by the elder lady adding—

"That she was at home, and would prefer keeping the girls with herself, rather than expose them to the crush of the supper table."

Agnes looked, at the moment, as if she would willingly have endured the crush; but a glance from her mother told her their absence from the hospitable board, had been previously arranged. Indeed, it was one of those matters, Mrs. O'Brady, with her usual forethought, had decided on.

"Where was the use of taking up room from other people, when the crowd would be sure, to make her sister faint; and the two girls would never get on there, by themselves; as to her part, she should be too much taken up, attending to others; and, as to the Major's looking after them, it was out of the question."

Colonel Saville did not go down, or rather up, to supper, for it was served in

an upper story, from the reception rooms, that occupied the ground floor, though Mrs. Power requested he would do so ; and Mrs. O'Brady, still more vehemently urged his accompanying her thither.

Saville had mixed much in good society; had the *savoir faire*, that only such society can give ; and such men can resist a lady's solicitation much better than any other. With some slight *badinage*, and prettily turned compliment to the lady, he gained his point, and was soon, with the other three, left in quiet possession of the now deserted room.

The party so left did not lack of conversation. Saville had passed through many lands, as well in the way of choice as in that of his profession ; and was a close observer of all ; Ireland, was to him, untrodden ground, and the party he now conversed with, had never left its shores, and seemed capable, and not unwilling, to give him every information about a country and

a people, he found it, at times, difficult, at all, to understand.

Mrs. Power, in her ladylike, quiet way, was not an unobservant person. Agnes had a quick sense of the ridiculous, and could point out all that was absurd in the Irish character ; and her cousin, with all the enthusiasm of a patriot, felt keenly the degradation of her father-land, debased amongst the nations, alike by the bigotry and ignorance of its Peasantry, and the cold-blooded indifference of its Gentry, to the moral and social elevation of its sons.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DHARRIGS AND CUMMINS.

Conversing on these topics, they did not hear or attend to an altercation that had commenced on the lawn, immediately in front of the house, between members of two rival factions, popularly known as the "Dharrigs and Cummins," named after their respective leaders, whose private quarrel, about some commonage of mountain, had led to outbreaks of violence, amongst their several connexions, that would have disgraced the most savage tribe of Kaf-

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firland, or the inhabitants of New Zealand. In fair, or market, chapel, or highway, the cry of "a Dharrig against a Cummins," or *vice versa*, was sure to be the prelude of a fight, as bloody and fierce, while it lasted, as the Burmese against the invader of his soil, or the famished Hyena attacking the robber of her young. The military force had been frequently called out to put down these disgraceful fights, but in vain; the Roman Catholic clergy had denounced them from the altar; but they still continued to rage, with increased virulence, enlisting in either party, almost every peasant in the country; a strong argument for those who contend that the Irish temperament is peculiarily suited to fighting; for certain it was, that the great majority amongst the ranks of either faction knew nothing, and cared still less, about the original cause of quarrel; they merely fought as amateurs, not caring to play the part of lookers on at a game, they felt as great a zest for, as their neighbours,

who dealt blows, in downright earnest, for what they considered an inroad on their legitimate property. The two factions met, on the present occasion, by the Dharrigs, driving over from the Limerick side, in hired vehicles, some of the guests to Drumger; these men, naturally enough, after depositing their respective fares, and seeing their horses done up for the night, went to visit the "boys," belonging to their own party, in the neighbourhood, then adjourned to the nearest public-house, and to use their own phrase, "afther dhrinking purty well, I thankee," came up to Drumgar, to see how matters were going on. The night had been a sultry one, the windows of the drawing-room were left open, with the precaution of placing outside them, some of the neighbours who could be trusted. Sergeant Wetherell, forming a protective phalanx, of country girls, at each window, with leave to look in themselves, but on no account, to permit a stranger; not an unnecessary precaution, as some of the party

within were likely to meet with a stray shot, unless some such had been used. Now it happened that the Cummins' faction preponderated about Drumgar, so that when the Dharrigs' party arrived, they found the others in possession of the windows. There is nothing, perhaps, the Irish peasant enjoys more than looking at his *betters*, surrounded with all the appendages of luxury, particularly when engaged in the exercise of dancing; the streets of our provincial towns, nay of our metropolis itself, attest this; let a party be going on where a glimpse can be caught of its company, and the half-starved, miserably clad wretch will stand, patiently shivering outside, lost in admiration (without a particle of envy in the feeling) of the good cheer and merriment within—certain it was that the rival factions, outside the windows, shewed no symptoms of fight, until the party in the drawing-room moved to supper; and then "down with the Cummins's; here's a Dharrig against any man," was the

signal for attack. Sergeant Wetherell dare not interfere—being obnoxious to both parties—but he lost no time in seeking out Nick O'Brady, who was amongst the last of the supper party, to use his influence in keeping them quiet. Nick made a seizure of the hackney coachmen and gingle drivers' whips, all heavily loaded with lead in the handles—then shoving into the back parlor the most refractory of the Dharrig party, and turning the key in the door, ascended once more to the supper room; but entrance there was now impossible. The door-way was completely jammed up by hungry expectants for supper, waiting, with commendable patience, for the ladies to retire; but Nick's was not of this enduring character—he elbowed a passage through the crowd, until he caught a glimpse of the over-filled room, and saw the utter hopelessness of the case; then, jostling his way back, descending the stairs with a rapid step, unlocked the door and emancipated the prisoners, telling them,

"They might now fight and be hanged; for, until they broke each other's skulls, he had no chance of his supper," adding, by way of encouragement, "the sooner they began at it the better."

That the party so addressed, lost no time in commencing, the sequel will fully shew. In the meantime, those in the supper room were enjoying the good things before them, much to their satisfaction, despite sundry flounces, lappets, and berthes, that were sorely dilapidated on their journey thither; but these misfortunes are seldom discovered at the time; and gentlemen, in the crush of a stair-case, must be forgiven for not remembering, at the moment, the frail texture of a lady's dress; those only at the door had any real grounds for complaint; the feast they looked upon was spread out, as far as regarded them in vain; the intervening crowd, formed a barrier as impassable as the spell on Tantalus. The Major had succeeded in placing Lady Glenmore in the identical spot, prepared for her

ladyship to occupy, in full view of the *chef d'œuvre* of the table, a huge trifle enclosed in a pallisade of spun sugar, on the foreground of which stood, in *basso relievo*, a pastry edifice, a complimentary representation of her ladyship's castle of Ballyross—but which required a label to discover the likeness—the guests were not, however, inclined to criticise these minor matters; the elder ones were too busy in procuring for themselves what they liked most, and the younger had too much on hand to bestow more than an "Oh! how beautiful," on the decoration of the *lay out*—at least, the female portion of it—and, for the credit of the gentlemen, be it spoken, they were not over nice in those matters; the quality and quantity, not the embellishments of the viands, being what most attracted their attention. Not so the officers—they did their part to a miracle—every ingenious device was duly noticed; and, besides securing their own supper, they secured the good graces of the female portion of the

party, by those thousand little attentions to the wants and wishes of the fair, that are sure to bear fruit in their proper season, producing a plentiful harvest of dinners, &c., no despicable consideration to the military man, doomed to combat with those "blue sprites" that are sure to haunt his waking hours in country quarters.

"All went merrily as a marriage bell," when suddenly there arose a sound, but not of revelry, on the lawn immediately before the house; the voices of men in savage combat—the shrieks of women—the loud barking of dogs, mingled with blows that fell thick and heavily on the skulls of the belligerent powers. All started from the supper table; but all could not reach the door at the same time; some ladies fainted outright, while others declared their full intention of doing so. Fathers, brothers, and lovers, rushed past them to secure the fire-arms left in Sergeant Wetherell's care, with a velocity that rendered explanation impossible. The

military beaux were left in possession of the field, or as Nick O'Brady afterwards observed, "in care of the heavy baggage."

That gentleman now entered the room, and regardless of hysterical sobs, faintings, real or pretended, took possession of a vacant seat at the deserted board, and with great alacrity, commenced a fierce attack on a ham and fowl, that lay contiguous; no way interrupted, in his operations by the swoonings, real or pretended, around him, or the din of battle that arose from the combatants beneath; mouthful after mouthful was swallowed in silent haste —bumper after bumper pledged to himself.

When Mrs. O'Brady, extricating her burly figure from the form that still lay right across her neck, (upset by the hasty exit of an elderly gentleman in search of a double-barrelled gun) and drawing herself from underneath the table, where she had sought refuge from, as she supposed, Captain Rock himself, now presented at the opposite side

from her son, a head, *minus*, a turban and plume, ornamented instead with a drapery of cob-webs, that fell in large festoons from the black silk cap which was wont to conceal her close cut, grey hair, and pass a very becoming front, with its flesh-coloured division as genuine on the public; but somehow, the black cap had slipped its moorings, and now displayed a small stripe of silver grey between it and the aforesaid front, that rested on the lady's nose, Such a figure, caused even Nick to pause in his labours—his knife and fork rested on his plate—and he indulged in an uncontrollable fit of laughter, strongly contrasted with the feelings of the company around.

"Well done, old girl," said he, when his breath came; "the Dharrigs and Cummins below hadn't a greater *scrimmage* than you contrived to get up under the table. Pray where did you leave your turban?"

This dutiful enquiry of her son electrified the lady, and snatching, hastily, a lighted branch, she dived into her late

retreat, as well to hide from prying eyes, the dilapidation of her head gear, as to seek for for the lost treasure underneath.

Nick had now discussed his supper to his perfect satisfaction, and indulged in a cursory view of the party in the room. Most of the ladies had made their way down stairs; still some remained, and amongst these were his sisters. Miss O'Brady sat with a very Siddons-like air, her back propped against the wall, her sandy coloured hair hanging lank and straight—pushed back from her face, as if, in the late commotion, it had taken sudden fright, or perhaps wished to escape contact with the lady's visage, that still retained traces of her recent exertion in the waltz, increasing a naturally scorbutic complexion to something the colour of what Mr. Wetherell denominated a *piannia rose*, strangely at variance with the languishing and fainting air with which she received the attentions of Lieutenant Jennings, a raw boy of twenty, who seemed considerably puzzled

at what was passing around him, and who mechanically held the vinaigrette, which was ever and anon applied to the olfactory nerve of the lady. When the shouts outside proclaimed the battle still raged with unmitigated fury below, her sisters, with some of the other ladies and officers, stood at the open windows of the apartment, which commanded a view of the scene of action, and to one of these did Nick O'Brady post, to come in, as he expressed it, "for a share of the fun."

Morning was but just breaking when the battle commenced, and now a glorious summer sun had struggled amongst the distant mountains, and revealed a scene, which for richness and beauty might compete with the boldest and loveliest in foreign land. Before them lay that valley, which our ancestors called the "Golden;" the sparkling waters of the blue Suir winding, like crested serpent, its majestic course to the ocean through fertile field and hanging wood; its banks indented with tower and

town, the Gothic castle of feudal days, the modern halls of the noble and the great, their wide extended desmesnes—their oaks, the growth of ages—their owners seeking aught that was beautiful in foreign soil, strangers to the enchanting scenery of their own; the peasant's lowly hut, with its thatched roof and mudded wall, beautified in the haze of distance, while the bold Galty stood like a giant sentinel, watching the fair garden beneath, formed a view such as men love to look on, and a fearful contrast to the moral degradation of its peasantry, as exhibited at the present moment, on the lawn of Drumgar. No such feeling, however, did it awaken in the minds of the party stationed at the windows above; the ladies of it experienced something like the excitement caused by a well acted tragedy, shading their eyes with their hands whenever an *alpeen* told on the skull of his adversary; but not withdrawing themselves all the time from witnessing the encounter. The officers regarded the affair

as a page of Irish history it would benefit them to read, with perhaps a vague feeling, it was got up as part of the entertainment; and Nick O'Brady looked on with the practised eye of a connoisseur, pointing out to the uninitiated, the several leaders of the Dharrig and Cummins faction; elucidating, what, to them, was a profound mystery, how the skulls of either party held out against such repeated blows.

"They are hardened by use to it," said Nick, "besides, there is nothing but fair play this morning; not a loaded whip amongst them. I saw to that," continued he, "before the *scrimmage* began, or those Dharrigs, that drove the people here, would have made short work with the Cummins's before the police could be up."

That efficient body, as the newspapers term them, now made their appearance, headed by Frank Mandeville, who had cut across the fields to secure their services; and the gentlemen who had ineffectually interfered before to separate the factions,

now joined their ranks ; and throwing themselves *en masse* into the fight—without waiting for the Major to commence the reading of the Riot Act, which he stood on the step of the hall-door, with glass in hand, prepared to do, for the third time—hit right and left until they cleared a passage straight through the combatants ; the police seizing on the ringleaders, the rest dispersing in all directions, whilst the gentlemen, returned to the house, to talk over, with their host, the conflict of the morning, and console themselves by discussing the fragments of the supper. The ladies, in the meantime, had held a counsel-of-war with Mrs. O'Brady—her turban, restored in some degree to its primitive position—she was seated in a retired room, with all that remained of the female portion of the party ; the greater number, after the first panic, having got away by a back entrance, their servants literally plucked as brands from the burning, by their indignant masters cuffing them out of the midst of the fray,

to drive home their frightened mistresses, "before half the fun was over." The ladies that remained were now enjoying, what in Munster parlance is called, "a rousing cup of *tay*," deploring the disagreeable interruption of the morning, all agreeing that it was now too far advanced to meet the gentlemen any more—broad daylight being a terrible foe to ladies who had sat up all night, and were frightened out of their good looks into the bargain.

The mistress of the mansion, with Colonel Saville, her daughter, and niece, had heard the commencement of the row, long before it rose to such a pitch as to disturb the party up stairs; the Colonel, to quiet their agitation, went to enquire from the servants its occasion, and before he returned, the battle raged so violently, that Mrs. Power and the two girls retired to their apartments for the night. The Major and his party, on their return from the fray, took possession of the vacated seats up stairs, the gentlemen attacking this

time the *dèbris* of the supper, much more energetically than when they made a first movement on it, in presence of the ladies. There was no more coquetting with cheese cakes, or finding out a likeness be-between the jelly on their plate, and the topaz ornaments of their partners, or taking a lesson in the language of the flowers, from the exotics in the vases around ; but each man clutched his knife and fork in a manner that evinced his determination to do battle, valiantly, with every substantial eatable that remained on the table ; whilst the Major declared that fighting was but dry work, following it by an order for the material and hot water *instanter*. This set things going. and the real business of the evening commenced, or, as the sergeant expressed himself in the kitchen,

" Whin wance, the hot water was called for; the gintlemin were fairly in for it."

The band was next subpæned to attend ; but alas! the skeleton of the " Gallant Tipperary " were now reduced to a tall,

gaunt-looking man, that played a huge bassoon, evidently far gone in consumption, leaving it a matter of wonderment, to the by-standers, how his famished jaws could contain wind sufficient to blow the instrument.

Sergeant Wetherell, however, for the honour of the corps, roused from his slumbers on the hot hearth, a little fat man, that performed on the drum. To a musical ear, perhaps, it was not the best calculated instrument in the world to accompany a *solo* with the bassoon ; but the little fat man possessed the advantage of being able to walk up-stairs, what none of his comrades could possibly achieve at that moment. These worthies were now marshalled by the sergeant, with military precision, to the supper-room, where the fun had become "fast and furious."

The health of the host had been proposed by the high-sheriff of the county ; and the Major stood up to return thanks. Had he consulted his own appearance, he

would have continued in a sitting posture ; but established rules cannot be broken through ; and there he stood, on his legs, such as they were, with his wig slightly awry from recent agitation, and a look of profound wisdom on his face, strangely at variance with the substance of his speech. Few of his auditors, however, were in a state to criticise. Toast succeeded toast—story out Heroded story ; the Major talked of his doings in ninety-eight, and his readiness to perform the same feats over again ; related numerous anecdotes of the "Gallant Tipperary," and how they drove man, woman, and child before them wherever they went ; spoke, as of a thing on record, his drinking fifty-six bumper toasts when acting as chairman to that distinguished mess, when they entertained "the North Cork," heaven knows where, with sundry other flights of fancy, which were not lost on the officers present.

Lieutenant Jennings, who had never spoken three connected words at his own mess,

now started to his feet, and vehemently declared his firm conviction, "That no regiment, of either ancient or modern times, could perform *half* what the Major declared his had done."

This was answered by Nick O'Brady, from the opposite side of the table, throwing a glass of scalding hot punch straight between the lieutenant's eyes; the friends of both parties seized hold on the gentlemen—some swore they should fight in the morning; and others declared for the matter being decided on the spot; whilst Colonel Saville and the Host strenuously urged an amicable arrangement before the gentlemen left the room.

The cunning of the Major, never forsook him; and, on the present occasion, he was not at all insensible to the disadvantage of a quarrel taking place at his house, between his wife's nephew and an officer, quartered at a place he was most anxious the government should choose, as a permanent station for a *depôt*. He, therefore,

was for reconciling the parties at once. The Colonel, on the other hand, looked on the transaction as a drunken *gaucherie*, alike disgraceful, if made public by a duel, to the corps in general, and to Jennings in particular, who was but a mere boy; besides, from not having drank as deep as the rest of the party, he was better qualified to judge of the matter.

After much eloquent talking on both sides, Mr. Nick O'Brady staggered towards Lieutenant Jennings, blamed the heat of the room, for mistaking the lieutenant's meaning, and expressed his contrition for what had happened; with an earnest wish, on his part, that they might become the very best possible friends, stretching out his hand, at the same time, which was seized on, and shook heartily by the lieutenant, declaring—

"There was no man, he considered, more a gentleman than Mr. O'Brady, when he choose; and that there was no country he

admired more than Ireland, of a fine day, with the sun shining, which it did now and again ; and he begged leave to say, he felt something telling him, he should become an Irishman before he left Bally—Bally—devil," hiccupped the lieutenant, at length. The latter termination, suggesting itself to him, as most descriptive of his quarters at Ballyvoyle.

This announcement was received by the company around, with three cheers, and a hip, hip, hurrah, the bassoon and drum, performing a frantic sort of "Paddy Carey" all the time. The lieutenant's and Nick O'Brady's healths were drank; the respondent speeches were cut short by both gentlemen falling under the table ; nor did they, afterwards, remember one word of what they had intended to say, but had a rambling recollection of seeing their Host thumping it, with all his might and main, before he took a place beside them, shouting at the top of his voice, a sort of chorus,

to the air played by the orchestra of the bassoon and drum.

"My rigdum, jigdum, deary O!
I'll follow my own figary, O!
I *bate* them all, both great and small,
When I *served* in the gallant Tipperary O!"

CHAPTER V.

YOUNG LADIES TALK POLITICS.

THE evening after presented a scene of quiet, gaining strength by the contrast from that just passed at Drumgar. It was one of those succeeding a sultry day in June, and the delicious coolness of the coming twilight, wafting on its breeze the odour of summer flowers, came soothingly and refreshingly into the open casement, at which were seated Agnes Power and her cousin.

Reaction had set in, when the overwrought spirit lags heavily, and the young

votary, after quaffing the first draught of worldly pleasure, feels, that the day after the feast must be one of profound quiet; a strange contrast to the feeling of after years, when the heart grows old, before the brow is wrinkled, when the child of pleasure needs new excitement—the night of dance and song must be succeeded by the day of bustle and amusement, the hardened spirit shrinks from solitary thought, the dreaded mirror, on whose surface is faithfully reflected talents misapplied, bestowed by the hand of Omnipotence, for higher and holier purposes, the heart steeped in worldliness, until that moment, when the account of each day is required becomes faint, shadowy, and distant, its stern realities dimmed and obscured by the gay nothings of time, its vast importance only appreciated on the threshold of Eternity.

The fair occupants of the apartment had no feelings, hacknied, by mixing with a gay, heartless world, the scene before

them was one of deep repose, and perfectly in unison with the feeling of languor, that stole insensibly over them at this hour.

The sun had set in a sea of molten gold; and now the distant heights were but faintly illuminated with the reflection of his last rays, leaving the valley below darkened by the broad shadow of the hills, tinging their tops with a roseate hue—nought broke on the stillness of the evening hour, save the distant barking of the cottier's dog—the faint halloo of the village children at play—and the flapping wing of the Coriesk, as it left the mountain river, passing on its way homewards to a distant bog. The profound silence of the apartment was first broken by Amy O'Brien.

"Agnes," she said, "how superior is nature over art; look on that beautiful scene before us, and confess, that when she holds holiday, the entertainment of man is but paltry in comparison."

"Yes," replied Agnes, "ours is a beau-

tiful land; but how it is, blighted by its peasantry; who could witness the disgraceful scene of last night, and not prefer brick walls and smoke to the fairest spot it boasts of, security to dwelling amongst a people, where the lives of the gentry are at the mercy of the pauper, who may think proper to bring to account any among them for the way he may manage either his own property or that of the public. Nay," continued the indignant girl, whilst her heightened colour told how warmly she resented such interference, "his very servants must be approved of by the poorest hind on his estate, or the life of their master is sure to be the forfeit."

Amy was silent for some moments; and when she next spoke, there was a tone of deep sadness in her voice.

"It is all too true, Agnes. In poor Ireland, every social tie is broken; but may not the peasant of this lawless land ask, who was the first aggressor?"

"Amy," returned her cousin, quickly,

"surely you would not have the forfeited estates restored, and such men as Corny MacCarthy, the village schoolmaster, at the head of the first properties in the county. I assure you," continued Agnes, smiling, "Corny has, in a rusty tin case, the title deeds of half the estates of Tipperary."

"No," returned Amy, "I would have no such thing; but I would look on them as fellow creatures; remembering that those lands once belonged to their ancestors; I would allow their descendents to live on them, as men, not as serfs, governed by a hard taskmaster; the daily labourer's toil repaid with a grudged sixpence, to be shared amongst, generally, a large and always a half-famished family."

Agnes slightly shuddered, then replied—

"It is indeed very true; but what can be done? Papa says, the lower order here are so fond of fighting, and so opposed to the laws, that the only thing to keep them quiet, is to keep them down."

"I would rather," returned her cousin,

treat them, as Sir Maurice Fitzgerald does his tenantry. Educate and encourage them to be industrious; he says, by giving them a stake to lose on his estate, he prevents their joining lawless societies, and by treating them kindly, and making the poor man feel the law protects him, as well as his richer neighbour, he looks no more on his priest as his only friend, but on his landlord as his best and kindest."

"You have been taking lessons how to quiet Tipperary, I perceive," said Agnes, glancing at her cousin a look of sly meaning, "was it the old knight himself, or his noble-looking grandson, Amy, that was your preceptor on the occasion?"

The eloquent blood rushed tumultuously over the cheek and brow of Amy O'Brien, conveying an idea of painful feeling, that changed the gay tone of her cousin, in a moment, to one of apology.

"I did not mean it, dear Amy," she cried, as she flung her arms round her neck. "And now that we have done with this

tiresome subject, come into the shrubbery for a turn, before the house is made up for the night, and forget my folly, and my politics," she added, as she tripped lightly out of the open window that descended to the ground, and was followed by her cousin, whose cheek still retained the fugitive colour, the allusion of Agnes had summoned. The young friends were soon lost in the winding path of the shrubbery. The elder one playing the part of listener, while her companion gaily chatted away of the events of the evening before. They pursued their walk for some time, when the dry grass rustling near them attracted their attention, and the next moment, a woman whose face was partly concealed by the large hood of her ample cloak, stood before them.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INTERVIEW.

"Oh! it's you, Biddy," said Agnes, as the stranger flung back the covering from off the upper part of her face, "I did not expect to meet you here, at this late hour, you startled us so much," continued she, catching her breath from surprise. "What has happened Biddy?" said Amy, as the sorrowful expression of the young woman's countenance met her gaze. "Is your husband, or any of your children ill?" "Wisha, no, miss," returned Biddy, "they're as well as sorra will let um be this blessed evening; but I made bould to come to ye, ladies, on' count ov the throuble that cum

on us, this time back. I did'nt wish to be pushin ov myself," continued Biddy, "seein the company ye had up at the great house, but whin I seen Martin like a disthracted man, and the childher bawlin and roarin afther the little Kerry, the *Bums* dhruv off the Bawn, I dhrew the hud ov my cloak up over my head, and run up like a wild woman to thry an get ye'er ladyship to intersade wid the masther, an not to have his honour so hard on a young couple in the biginin ov their days. Moreover, whin the money was riz out ov the bank, to pay Larry Costelloe's rint, that was behindhand, to the masther, an sure Martin would make an affidavy that he nivir seen as much as a penny ov the money, nor that he, nor wan ov his, was nivir behouldin to Larry Costelloe fur a farthin, or a farthin's worth, or a male's mate since we come in id ; an there's not a nabur in the place but id tell him the same thing, over an' over agin; an' here we are," continued the young mother, hushing all the time the child that lay on her bosom,

"brought to misforthin and throuble all thro' the sleveen ways ov that Larry Costelloe; an' Martin Sweeney, to be so tindher hearted, as to put himself in hoult at the bank, just to save a naburin boy frum throuble; an now, wid the long summer afore us, an' the hard times that are in id, an' three poor crathurs ov children on the floore, we may lock the doore and take the bag on our back, if his honour won't listen to rason, an' not be so black against us, intirely, intirely."

A slight sob followed this, and pressing to her bosom the child that now became uneasy, stood before them a picture of suffering and woe, very different from the Biddy of former days, that was wont to hail their visit at her mother's cabin, or at her own humble dwelling, with a smile and a welcome that came straight from the heart. In those days Biddy was a rustic Hebe, looking as the neighbour's said, "The model of a contented mind, a brave

hearty girl that had something pleasant to say to every body that cum across her."

The contrast, she now exhibited to all this, struck her auditors painfully; they felt and expressed much sympathy for her and Martin, assuring Biddy that nothing should be wanting on their part to try and soften the Major towards him, and forgive him at least some of the money he was decreed for," telling her, at the same time, "to keep up her spirits and hope the best." Agnes adding, "to be sure to come over the next morning, at eleven o'clock, and they would try and make papa see her, and hear her own story of the matter," as she, Agnes, felt convinced when he did, "it would alter things for the better."

The increasing twilight warned them to return, and wishing Biddy "good night," retraced their path homewards.

"Good night to ye, ladies," said Biddy, as she stood watching their receding figures through the winding of the shrubbery; "An' may the blessin' ov the sorra-

ful heart light on ye, wherever ye go, late an' airly, fur ye've taken a load off ov mine, this blessid night, as big as the Hill ov Killough, an' as heavy as iv a a stone weight, ov lead, was in id."

Then turning on her way home, and patting the head of her child, which now shewed symptoms of restlessness, addressed it in that soothing voice, so peculiar to an Irish nurse.

"Whisht, *ma vourneen*; havn't you the good news to tell ye'er poor faather afore ye this night, an' that he's not now the poor desolate crathur he was, condimn'd widout judge, or jury, an' all he had, on the face ov the livin' Arth, sayzed afore his two eyes."

And with a feeling that her cause was to have a fair hearing, the next morning, and that Biddy herself was to be heard in the defence, she wended her way joyfully home, cheering her husband and herself with the firm hope that—

"Whin the matther was open'd up fairly

to the masther, he'd nivir have the heart to bring rap and ruin on a dacent boy, like Martin Sweeney, fur goin security fur a nabur in disthress."

The next morning brought Biddy at eleven *sharp* to Drumgar, but much altered, for the better, from the Biddy of the evening before. She now wore a dark blue stuff gown, in colour nearly approaching to a royal purple, fitting tightly to her handsome figure, short enough in the skirt to display a very *clane* turned ankle, encased in a black worsted stocking, of the finest texture, set off to advantage, (by what Biddy herself would term) "a pair of well fitting *shoe-makers*, polished to the *ninety-nines*;" a small handkerchief, whose brilliant hues contrasted well with the colour of her dress, was worn on her shoulders, crossed in front, so as to give a glimpse of the fair and well-formed neck of the wearer; her hair was light brown, put smoothly in bands, at either side of a handsome, expressive-looking face, lit up with

hope and expectation, around which was plaited, in full and becoming quills, the lace border of her Sunday cap, surmounted with the hood of her *bran new* blue cloak, (though in use since her marriage), neatly folded, so as to rest on the back of her head, displaying on its border a stripe of broad black velvet; the cloak itself resting on the shoulder of the wearer, not closing in front, but forming, from its dark colour and position, a sort of back ground to the rest of Biddy's finery; a pair of grey cotton gloves finished this not unbecoming dress of a peasantry, whose sins, whatever they may have been, had not attained the pretension of of their class in Leinster, aping in their holiday garments the dress of their superiors, displaying a kind of caricature costume of the gentry, "bringing the toe of the peasant a *leetle* too near the heel of the courtier."

But to return to Biddy; she had scarcely made her appearance outside the window of the room, occupied by Agnes and her cousin,

when it was opened by the latter. The room they sat in was the same they conversed in the evening before; it was still called the "school room," and continued to be a favourite one with both girls, for either work or study, they had sought it that morning in order to watch the approach of Biddy through the shrubbery, and talk over, by themselves, her chance of success; she and her husband were favourites with both cousins, but Amy felt a peculiar interest in all that concerned her—for Biddy's mother had been her nurse, under her care had she been left, until she attained nearly her fifth year, and the memory of Nurse Mooney's kindness had never been obliterated from her mind—Biddy, in those days, was a youngster, a light-hearted, good-humoured girl, always proud to be left in charge of Miss Amy, and always sure to amuse her to the best of her power; she pulled cowslips to make *killicaws* for the young lady to toss —strung wild strawberries for her use, and, at times, crowned her fair brow with a

tiny coronet of bulrushes, performing a sort of triumphant dance around her, chaunting in a wild, recitative tone, the noble deeds of her forefathers—When

> Brave Brian Boru!
> Made the Dane pullilew.

Nor was the future prowess of the young beauty herself overlooked on those occasions. Like a Pythoness Priestess, she was wont to prophesy, (though unskilled in Moore's beautiful ballad) that

> The collar of gold,
> Which Malachi wore
> Should not rest with the Sassenach stranger.

These things were not forgotten by Amy; and when she removed to Drumgar, the indulgent kindness of Mrs. Power allowed frequent visits to the cabin of Nurse Mooney. Then commenced the courtship

of Biddy with Martin Sweeney, before either had much more than emerged from childhood; he was always in the way to do a handy turn for the young ladies—to bring moss from the neighbouring hills—to line their summer house, and build the rustic edifice as well—catch the fleckered trout in the mountain stream, for their mid-day repast, and supply the wild *frawhan* from the neighbouring wood, as the dessert on those occasions.

A mutual feeling of good-will sprang up between the parties; and when Martin and Biddy became man and wife, the ladies of Drumgar paid the first visit of congratulation to the young couple; and their bounty, on the occasion, (the hoarded pocket money of years) furnished for them a well-stocked *dhresser*; and the bride, being a *stirring* body herself, and the bridegroom having a *dacent* notion, their cabin and all about it looked more tidy and comfortable than any in the parish.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAJOR GRANTS AN AUDIENCE.

As Biddy stood outside the opened window, she cast a hurried glance at the face of Amy ; and whatever she read there, threw a shade of dismay and trepidation over her own.

"Will his honour see me, miss ?" was her first query ; the respondent "Yes," of Amy restored her former confidence, and, as if replying to the expression of her face, she said, "Well thin, I don't fear, miss, if I wance git to spake to the masther, but that he'll see us righted. He can't shut his eyes,

Miss Amy, to the misery and distraction ov two young crathurs that nivir wronged his honour, or seen him wronged, since the first day we cum in id. An' Martin's faather an' grandfaather, an' all belongin' to him, liv'd undher the family, since there was a Power at Drumgar. An' sure, ye know yoursilf, miss, the Mooneys nursed an' follow'd fur ye'er own mamma, an' her mother before her ; an' why should wan ov her name now, miss, turn the black look on my mother's daaghther?"

"I hope from my very heart," said Amy, "that you may succeed with my uncle; but some one has prejudiced him against Martin ; and this morning he was very angry with Miss Agnes and me for speaking in his favor, and we had a great deal to do, Biddy, to get him to consent to seeing you at all."

"May the Lord do as much an' more for ye ladies," returned Biddy. "An' sooner than bring his honour's frown on aither ov ye, I'll just go back to Martin,

the way I cum, an' thrust to the great God above us, to see jistice done us wan time or anither."

"No," interposed Amy. "You must now go and try what you can do with my uncle; and tell him, Biddy, that the money got out of the bank was for Costelloe, and that Martin was only the security, and that if you are compelled now to pay his debt, you will have nothing to meet the May rent."

"Thankee, Miss Amy, for yeer good advice," said Biddy, "an' beganays, Counsillor O'Connell himself couldn't give a boddy betther."

"Go now round to the office door and knock," returned Amy, "and be sure to remember what I said."

Biddy lost no time in following the advice just given, and raising the knocker of the office door, let it fall slowly and hesitatingly, producing a faint sound, no way likely to startle its inmates; but still sufficient to draw the attention of Sergeant

Wetherall, who, dressed in a suit of his master's cast-off garments, the *continuations* of which, reaching just below the top of a very grim-looking Hessian boot, once, also, the property of that distinguished individual, now made his appearance, at the door, and confronted our friend Biddy, she curtsied reverentially, and slowly raising her eyes to the smooth, stiffened features of the veteran, enquired,—

"Whether she could make so bould as to ax Misther Sergeant Wetherell would he plaise to tell her, could she be afther seein the Majors Honour jist fur wan minnit."

That functionary deigned no reply, but casting a furtive glance towards the enquirer, opened a door at the right hand side of the small hall, and with a wave of the arm, motioned Biddy to enter; then closing it behind her, drew himself up outside in a sort of military attitude, with his attention certainly not slumbering as to what was passing at the other side of the door. Biddy, in the meantime,

found herself in the presence of her landlord, that gentleman thought some preparation necessary to make a due impression on his visitor; he now sat at the upper end of the apartment, with his back to a chimney-piece, over whose centre was suspended a sword, with its faded belt and tassels, "its temper untried, its steel unbent," supported on one side by a short fusee, and a pair of cavalry pistols, sleeping in their holsters; on the other was displayed Sergeant Wetherell's halbert, and a foraging cap of his master's, while contiguous, hung a more modern dress, one of the "gallant Tipperary," resembling a huge black, bear-skin muff, over whose surface a speculating spider was weaving a net for unwary flies, no bad type of the owner of the apartment; the rest of the furniture was of a miscellaneous character, no way in keeping with the military display on the walls; here were to be found bee-hives, that in winter served as repositories for garden seeds, and dried bulbous

roots, saved by the overseeing care of the sergeant, who, to his many other onerous duties, added that of superintending the garden, there the accumulated lumber of the whole establishment was, by the watchful *surveillance* of master and man, deposited in what was designated "the Master's Study;" its only claim to that dignified appellation being the piles of old newspapers and copies of the Hue-and-Cry, the account-books belonging to the Loan fund and Saving's Bank, with some unfilled summonses, intended as invitations, to appear before the bench at Ballyvoyle, that lay promiscuously scattered on the table at which the Major was seated; immediately before him was placed a large desk, whose massive brass bindings and clasps were evidently intended to set time and the thief equally at defiance. It now lay open, and the Major leaned over it, diligently executing some piece of penmanship, when the opening and shutting of the door caused him to raise his eye from his task,

and encounter those of his fair suppliant; he was the first to break a silence which had made Biddy distinctly hear the throbbings of her heart.

"You are Sweeney's wife, I presume?" said the Major, looking sternly at her over the spectacles which rested on his nose.

Biddy curtsied, for no words came to her parched lips for utterance, and the Major paused, as if for a verbal announcement of her claim to that title; but a stronger feeling than the mortal fear she endured at being left *tete-à-tete* with her landlord, now took possession of her heart, the lightnings flash was not more rapid than the thoughts which glanced through the breast of Biddy, at this moment. The sunny days of her early courtship—the calm joys of her wedded life—the husband so loved and wronged, all rose tumultuously before her mind's eye, and nerved her for the encounter—in the whisperings of her own heart, the faithful creature pledged herself to die before she left the apartment

or do justice to her injured husband ; and, with the proud feeling inspired by such a vow, she raised her flashing eyes to those of the Major, and in a tone, in which triumph was mingled with deep feeling, said—

"Yes, ye'er honour, I am Martin Sweeney's wife, and his happy wife, too, afore Larry Costelloe cum round him to put in security at the bank for the twinty-five pound, fur Larry, that he wanted to rise out ov id, fur ye'er honour, on 'count ov his arrares; an' a farthin ov that money Martin nivir handled, nur nivir had a transaction wid Larry afore, in all his born days ; and now our cattle, and furniture, the pratees that was to see us through the summer, an' the bit ov hay jist cut on the swarth was saized, afore us, by the bailiffs, fur the decree, an' I, an' my husband, an' my three angyshores ov childher, may go on the wide world till harvest; and thin what have we to make the May rint, fur ye'er honour? sorra a cow left to make a

bit ov butther, or a pig fat, fur the Micklemas fair."

Here Biddy took breath, thinking she had fairly opened the case to his *honour*; and that gentleman regarding her with a very funny expression of countenance, said—

"Upon my word, Mrs. Sweeney, you are a very clever, as well as a very eloquent lady, and a scholar, too, I suppose; can you read your husband's writing however, if you cannot, I can."

And so saying, he opened a compartment of his desk, and drew from it a small, soiled piece of paper, and holding it across the table towards Biddy, requested—

"She would have the kindness to tell him whether that was Martin Sweeney's signature or not."

"We nivir denied id, ye'er honour," said Biddy; "bud, when Larry Costelloe cum first to him, puttin' his cumhether on him, to join him in that bit ov a note, Martin dhrew away from him, an' tould him, he

nivir did the likes fur anny nabur ; and, moreover, that he should talk to the woman at home, afore he'd think of doin a thing ov the sort ; so whin he cum home, he up, an' he tells me all Larry was sayin', an' I set my face black aginst id, fur I knew fur sartin, that Larry was bint on no good purpose, fur manny a day, bud was makin' up, wid anither boy, to go out to 'Merikay ; thin we heard no more ov id, untle, won fine evenin', Larry an' Sargeant Witherill cums in, wid—

"'God save all here ; an' it's a fine flock ov childher ye have, Mrs. Sweeney ; an' they're as fat as the Boniveens that are afther the black sow ; and 'tis ye'ersilf, Martin, has the fine breed ov pigs, an' begogstees, the young calves are no way behind hand.'

"Thin, ye'er honour, the sargeant open'd the thrinches to Martin, in his own studdy way—

"'It's bud the sthroke ov a pen, Martin,' sez he, 'an' ye'll git a nabur out ov

throuble be id; and the Major himsilf,' sez he, 'tould me to tell ye to sign id,' sez he, 'jist to git the money out ov the beank fur Larry, so come down in the mornin',' sez he, 'to the office, an' ye'll nivir hear a word more about id.'

"So what could Martin do, ye'er honour, bud jist what the sargeant bid him; an', if he was to the fore, this blessid minnit, he'd jist tell ye'er honour, word for word, as I'm afther tellin' ye."

The Major now rang a small bell, that lay on the table near him, and the next moment, Sergeant Wetherall was standing at his master's side of the door, retaining the same attitude he stood in a moment before at the other.

"Dan," said his master, "this woman accuses you of drawing in her husband to sign this note of security at the Loan-fund Bank."

The sergeant gave a start, that would secure the fortune of any modern actor, and so well did he look surprise, that even the observant Major was imposed on, in be-

lieving that it was the first time any such base insinuation had ever reached the sergeant's ear; but in justice to that member, of Mr. Dan Wetherell, it must be acknowledged, that every word Biddy made use of, in her colloquy with his master, told distinctly, at his side of the door.

"Me, sir," said Dan, with a look of innocence that would have acquitted Jack Shepherd himself, "I never dhreamt ov the like—I was dhrawn in to sign the security; bud 'twas afther Martin Sweeney signed id; an' my name was only put, fur form's sake. Look at the note, Major, an' 'twill clear me ov havin' anything to do wid the matther. My name, I'll be bound, is the last on id, an' only put down to make up the number to the bank. Whoever heerd," continued Dan, with a very legal look, "ov the last name on a note being responsible fur id, in anny coort ov jistice in the world."

"Certainly not," returned the Major; and taking up the note which lay on the

desk before him, carefully examined the signatures; this was a moment of intense torture to Biddy, and the Major prolonged it, by a very strict scrutiny of the names at the bottom of the note. "You are right, sergeant," he at length said. "Daniel Wetherell comes after Martin Sweeney; and your husband," continued he, addressing Biddy, in a very oracular tone, "must pay the penalty for putting his name to a note he knew he was responsible for. Go home, woman, and tell your husband from me, that if he shows any disposition to make away with the crop I will put keepers on it a month before it is fit to cut, and now let me never again be tormented about this business."

Biddy listened in silence, until her landlord had finished, then advancing towards the table where he sat, clasping her hands energetically together, whilst she fixed her beseeching eyes on his face, cried out—

"Oh, Masther dear, don't be so black aginst us intirely, intirely. Don't cant all

we have in the living world, bud give us some ov the things back, an' we'll work late an' airly to make it up fur ye'er honour—Don't lave my childher widout a dhrop ov milk, or a praty to ate, the long summer, or a pig on the floore to hilp the May rint fur ye'er honour."

And the wretched woman wrung her hands with an intensity of agony that would have melted any heart but that of an obdurate landlord.

"Turn that woman out of the room, Sergeant Wetherell," said the Major, in a military tone of command to his non-commissioned officer, "she deserves that her back, and the Provost Marshal's task should become acquainted."

CHAPTER VIII.

BIDDY SHOWS FIGHT.

THE taunt of the Major was followed by a seizure of Biddy's shoulder by the Sergeant with a very evident intention, on his part, to execute to the letter the order of his master; but Biddy's blood was up, and flinging herself, by a sudden movement, from his rude grasp, she faced him, as the baited stag does his pursuer, indignation and contempt swelling in every feature, and fixing on him a withering look, she cried—

"Is id you, Dan Witherill, or the likes of ye, daare to lay ye'er dirty hand on an

honest woman's shoulder, did id come to Nurse Mooney's daughther's turn to be thrated in sich a manner by ould Dan Witherill, the informer's son, that found sweet Tipprary too hot fur him, an' got to cool himsilf in Botany Bay afther; an' you, yoursilf, ye false-hearted lick spittle, that id come in to the poor man's cabin wid ye'er palaver, an' light ye'er pipe at his fire-side to decave him. May ye have ye'er desarvins sooner or later, Dan Witherill, an' may ye'er masther nivir rue the day he listened to ye'er bad advice."

And flinging herself out of the room before the Sergeant could again make a seizure, left master and man regarding each other with very portentous looks.

The outbreak of Biddy was so unexpected, that neither of her auditors were prepared with a reply; the passage she had alluded to, in the pedigree of the Wetherell family, was a sore subject to the representative of the race then present. And no honours, he had achieved himself,

had ever obliterated the ban attached to the informer's son—the name most odious to an Irish ear; nor was the odium lessened by the elder Wetherell, *nolens-volens*, having to visit the unclassic shores of New Holland, in the latter part of his career, where, by hard swearing, he had sent on a voyage of discovery, many of his countrymen before. It was bringing all this afresh to his son's mind that now paralysed him for a moment; and a feeling of hate—even greater than that he regarded most of her class in life with—kindled in his breast towards Biddy, and turning on his master a warning look, said,

"If you don't put down these Sweeneys, sir, they'll rise the counthry on ye'er back. The tongue of that woman is worse than a morthar shot—wance she opens out; an' if they're not dhruv out ov the place, ye'er honour will be sorry fur id when 'tis too late."

"You are right, Dan," said the Major, locking his desk at the same time. "Let

Sweeney's things be sold without any delay, and see that some of the police are in the way while the auction is going on ; and if their friends bid for them, buy in the things yourself. Then," continued he, rising from his chair, "when keepers are put on the crop, a month before it is fit to cut, I think Mr. Sweeney and his beldame of a wife may go to the right about in double quick."

Dan grinned at this conclusion, and his master stepped out of the apartment with a firm, upright air, such as a generous-hearted man, after dispensing justice to his fellow man, is fully entitled to wear.

A deep searcher into thoughts, which too often bid human scrutiny defiance, would have found food for much curious investigation, had he witnessed the scene we have just described, and followed the Major's steps, a few moments after, to his own drawing-room. The self-satisfied, important air he wore on this occasion—the look of elation which had not yet faded

from his features, to a common observer, would be totally irreconcileable, with the full consciousness that must have existed in his own bosom, that his lips had that day brought desolation to the hearts of his fellow creatures, and that, however, he might palliate, under the plea of looking to his own interest, bringing unprovoked ruin on an innocent man; still, that there must have remained that "small, still voice" within him, that would cast its broad shadow on his brow, though its silent murmurs could not restrain him from inflicting injury on his fellow man.

The theory of human nature would lead us to this conclusion; but the history of mankind, in all ages, and a practical acquaintance with the busy world around, forbids us from adopting it as true. Certain modes of thinking and acting may be taken up, false alike in their principle, and destructive in their consequences, yet pursued with an energy and perseverance,

that a mere looker on would suppose could only belong to the cause of truth itself. The uninvestigated dogma becomes a rule of action, requiring superhuman light, like the spear of Ithuriel, to pierce the thick darkness that enshrouds the morally diseased mind ; and such a mind will go on, in its fatally erroneous course, with a complacency, and self-approval—a practical enigma to all, neither investigated nor understood by itself.

Amongst the gentry of the south, at this period, there were many who felt in common with Major Power, that the security of themselves, and their property, depended on the subjection of the peasantry ; the position was a false one ; but it had been acted on by their fathers, and in their own day ; and though few among them would have carried out the principle so far, as to bring ruin on their poorer neighbour ; still, the starving population around them was regarded with but little sympathy—

perhaps a feeling of retributive justice contributed to this; scarcely any among the higher classes, who had not lost a kinsman, or a friend, by the hand of the assassin; and, without waiting to investigate the cause of the evil, all determined to put it down, by coercive measures, and lessen the crime around them, by the "strong arm of the law."

The Major, to aid his own views, threw himself into the ranks of this party, though amongst his confreres there were high-minded men, honourable and true, who would have shrunk from the odious task of debasing a brave and generous people, and exposed to public infamy, had they detected the arbitrary and unconstitutional acts of their less scrupulous brother towards his miserable dependants, but the common principle kept these matters from anything like a close investigation; the outcry against the savage and lawless peasantry, ran too high for any palliative to be heard in their favour.

The Insurrection Act was the *panacea* for Ireland, and the spectacle of a public execution was the Normal school for "young Tipperary" to civilize and enlighten them, in these, we trust, by-gone days. The popular feeling, then, of his own order, was in the Major's favor, though he would have shrunk from exposing to any amongst them, the by-play he had used on this, and on other occasions; still, whatever his secret misgivings might be as to the rectitude of his conduct, his front and bearing gave no sign of any conscientious struggle within, if any such existed; and it was with an air and manner that bespoke a proud consciousness of having "done the state some service," that he now joined Mrs. O'Brady and her fair daughters who were laying close siege in the drawing-room to some of the 5—th; while those *flitting bipeds*, like birds of passage at sea, folding their weary wing on some friendly sail, sought only a momentary relief from the dull tedium of a country quarter. In the mere idle reck-

lessness of having nothing better to do, resigned themselves to the sweets of the passing hour, without casting one boding thought on the ulterior consequences of a *little harmless flirtation.*

CHAPTER IX.

FLIRTATION.

Flirtation, like the revolutionary waves of an autumnal sea, flings to the wind the idle command, so far shalt thou go, and no farther; and in reckless defiance of self-imposed restriction, many a man amongst its votaries, who would have shrunk from making love *de jure*, is found day after day wooing *de facto* an implied, though unacknowledged lover, fettered in his own judgment by no chain his lip has wove, he goes on his course utterly regardless of what sentence the after feelings of the lady

might pass on his conduct; selfishly secure, he cares not that she may deem him bound by those indescribable attentions which in equity, may fairly be termed a bill of declaration on his part, to be sustained by a special pleading on some future occasion. On the other hand, ladies are sometimes plaintiffs in the case, and a gentleman's demurrer is sure to be overruled. The officers of the 5—th, by no volition of their own, supplied three accredited sons-in-law in *futuro*, to Mrs. O'Brady. Lieutenant Jennings was a spooney boy, *ergo* Miss O'Brady's good sense, and years of experience, decided clearly her right to be his guide, while Captain Lindsay's love of music and indifference to aught else, pointed him out at once as a companion for life, in every way suited to her second daughter, Kate, the learned lady of the family; and Captain Grant's happy knack of laughing and being laughed at. consigned him naturally enough into a very

fit and proper suitor for her youngest and laughter-loving daughter, Lucy.

To give all parties an opportunity of knowing each other better, many and sundry meetings had been good-naturedly brought about by the considerative mamma; amongst others a morning party to visit the romantic castle of Lisfinn, and partake of a cold dinner in the neighbouring wood, Mrs. Power had declined joining this party, and Amy decided on being her companion for the day. Agnes, Mrs. O'Brady insisted should accompany them, or rather herself on the jaunting car, as well to secure a listener during her drive, as to prevent any rencontre between her niece and Colonel Saville, who was expected that day to visit the detachment from head-quarters, and as he was wont to do, likely to call Drumgar, the three sisters, with their military escort, which consisted of Captains, Grant and Lindsay, Lieutenant Jennings, and Mr. Foster, took a short path which led towards

the river, where was moored a boat that would take them across the Lisfrinn. Mrs. O'Brady, with the creature comforts stowed away in the well of the outside car, took a more circuitous route. Their course lay along a road which wound, for some time, within view of the river, and crossing it by a handsome bridge, about half a mile below the castle, they entered the demense by the upper gate—the avenue, winding along the brow of a lofty ridge, commanded a bold and extensive view of the noble river that flowed majestically beneath. A highly cultivated and well wooded country lay all around, its verdant meads extending as far as the eye could range, while the lofty mountains, that formed its background, were fringed with copses of oak, intermingled with shining holly—the indigenous growth of the soil gradually creeping towards their sterile and dusky summits.

Agnes would have enjoyed the scenery around did her aunt permit; but that lady took the opportunity of expressing, in very

strong language, her disapprobation of her niece's conduct at and since the memorable night of the ball ; and painted, in glowing colours, the great impropriety of so young a person leading off with Colonel Saville, as well as the forwardness of always looking pleased whenever they subsequently met.

By the time they arrived in the court-yard of Lisfinn, the enormity of such crimes was duly set forth by the aunt, and it was with a flushed cheek, and glistening eye, her niece jumped off the car, and enquired of the porter, "Was Mrs. Donovan at home ?" then telling her aunt she had a message for the old housekeeper, made the best of her way into the house, leaving the elder lady to make the necessary arrangements ere the rest of the party should arrive.

It had been previously settled that Major Power was to join them at the Hermitage —a secluded spot, some distance from the Castle, at five o'clock—and in the mean-time, Mrs. O'Brady, no despicable quarter-

master, reconnoitred the gardens and larder of Lisfinn, while Agnes sought her old acquaintance in the room *par excellence* her own, busily engaged removing green mould from sundry pots of conserves and preserves of the last year.

"Oh, then, Miss Power, ye'er welcome," said the old woman, as she recognised her young visitor, and rose from her chair, casting a flurried glance at the littered table, whilst a slight shade of vexation passed accoss her yet comely features, at being thus caught without any preparation; "but I'm sadly out of sorts to-day, with my dirty job; never thinking a fine young lady was coming to pay me a visit; but now come and rest yourself, Miss, in a room fit for ye to sit down in, an' I'll get a nice bit of luncheon for ye, an' tell my master what a handsome young lady he has for a visitor this mornin."

In vain did Agnes plead her early dinner at the hermitage, and begged Sir Maurice might not be disturbed; but the old

house-keeper was on hospitable thoughts too intent, to accept of any excuse, and amidst sundry and formal enquiries for Mrs. Power and Miss O'Brien, marshalled the way to the drawing room—then closing the door on her visitor, went briskly forward at once, to announce her arrival, and prepare for her repast, scarcely listening to the message of enquiry about the old woman's own health, which Mrs. Power had kindly charged her daughter that morning to deliver.

CHAPTER X.

EARLY REMINISCENCE.

UNDER these circumstances, Agnes Power stood in the drawing-room of Lisfinn—a spot she had not visited for nearly two years ; but not the less endeared to her, by receiving there, from one who was now no more, those small but well-remembered kindnesses bestowed upon her, in early childhood, and never to be forgotten in the wear and tear of after years—the links that bind us then, death alone can snap asunder, —the rust of time fails to corrode such away.

The every day impressions of middle life glide imperceptibly from our memories —the current of the human mind has then gained strength, when it rushes along in its headlong career, neither affected by the obstructions in its course, or the flowers that decorate its bank—not as when it first left the mountain side—each pebble was then murmured over, each flower was caressed in its progress, like the joys and sorrows of our early childhood, dwelt on, and remembered to the latest period of existence, while the great events of our maturer years are swallowed up in the rapid and varied succession of daily occurrences, either leaving us no time to remember each one in particular—or the heart, losing its malleable properties, becomes callous to all but its first and early impressions. Those now rushed in full tide on the soul of Agnes, peopling, the large solitary apartment she gazed around on, with the forms that caressed her childhood—their voices, at memory's call, waking the silent echoes

of the deserted room. The mother and son had passed away, as if they had never been. How vividly did Agnes recal the pleasant tasks assigned her and Amy, by the former; the words of counsel that fell from her lips, unheeded at the time by their young hearts, but never to be erased, while the thousand kindnesses of mother and son, rose tumultuously before her mind's eye, and tears, large, bright, and fast, rolled in rapid succession down her cheek.

"Oh Amy," she cried, "you have been spared the anguish of this moment; how would your poor heart bleed to stand here, and look on the rich gilded furniture of this room, that has never altered, and think where are they that once sat in it, now? She who was only a friend to me," continued Agnes, passionately, "was a mother to you, Amy, and she lies cold and low, and he who was more than a brother to you, Amy, is now estranged, separated for ever. May God comfort you, my dear, dear cousin," cried the affectionate young

creature, fervently clasping her hands together, "I regret those who are gone and changed; but you think of them when others are gay—you weep for them in silence and in sorrow."

Approaching footsteps aroused Agnes from these melancholy reflections, and hastily wiping away all traces of her late emotion, she turned to an adjoining window, and, through vainly restrained tears, looked out on the scene before her.

The door of the apartment opened, and a well-known voice saluted her ear with—

"Ha, Miss Agnes, this is kind of you, fore George, you're as welcome as the flowers of May, or a thaw in December, after no run and a hard frost; and now that I have'nt Gerald to entertain you, I must present his friend instead; Miss Power, my grandson's most particular friend, Colonel Saville."

Here Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, for he it

was, bowed ceremoniously, as a courtier would in the early days of George III, waving his hand gracefully from the lady to the gentleman ; then reversing the order of introduction, " Colonel Saville, Miss Power," with a correspondent wave of the arm, resumed, after this formal piece of introduction, his usual gay, light-hearted manner.

Agnes in the meantime received the Colonel's claim on her, as an acquaintance, with some embarrassment. He was of all others the last she had expected to meet that morning, and the rencontre though far from disagreeable, still was so totally unexpected, and the place of meeting so strange, that her manner became quite confused, and she answered at random the enquiries of both the Colonel and Sir Maurice ; until the latter, perceiving her agitation, and ascribing it to the natural timidity of a very young person, cried out—

" This will never do, Colonel, two

such heroes as you and I, are enough to scare this little witch out of her wits ; but were you twice as fine a fellow, you shall not rob me of my *tete-à-tete.* Come, my little pet," continued the old man, gaily, advancing to Agnes, and kindly drawing her arm within his own, "we will steal a march as far as the music-room on this redoubted soldier, while you, Colonel, can enjoy your *otium cum dignitate* undisturbed ; and when thought grows dull," said the knight, as they passed into the inner-room, "take a peep at us happy mortals through the open door-way ;" he then led Agnes to the upper end of the inner apartment ; and when he next spoke, she involuntarily started at the altered and melancholy tone of his voice. "I love this old room," he said, "more than any other. It was to please her that is in heaven, I fitted it up more than fifty years ago ; and then it was altered for another ; and she, too, is gone ; and to look back, I, sometimes, think it only a day and a night, continued the old

man, musingly, as if to himself—"a dark, cheerless, dreary night."

Agnes remembered that, in former days, his gayest hours were wont to be succeeded by the deepest depression, and hastened to remove the gathering gloom, by asking after her old acquaintance Gerald; this restored all his former animation; and, in a gay voice, he replied—

"Oh, I had nearly forgotten to tell you all about my noble grandson, Miss Agnes: he is on his way home, so his friend, Colonel Saville, came over to tell me this morning: he writes more constantly to the Colonel than to me; bnt old men are not good correspondents; and I have not answered his last letter yet. I began it—and one thing or another prevented my finishing it. The Colonel tells me now, he will be here before it could reach him. I felt myself growing young this morning, when this good news reached me; but it's not fair to punish the welcome messenger, all this time; be-

sides, but half his tale was told, when your old friend, Mrs. Donovan, came to tell me, 'such a pretty young lady was waiting to see my honour in the drawing-room.' "

Agnes blushed, and laughed, while her host fidgetted into the room they had just quitted, exclaiming—

"The private council is broken up—we summon you, Colonel, to the presence of the fair lady, to bear honourable testimony to the good looks, and improved manners of my illustrious grandson."

And with a formal wave of his arm, the old gentleman once more ushered the Colonel into the presence of Agnes; this time it was attended with no embarrassment on either side, for both laughed at the pomposity of the summons; and the gentleman advancing, begged to know—

"Whether he should commence first, by describing his friend's *distingué* appearance, or dwell on what some ladies admired most, the fascinating piquancy of his manner."

"Of the latter, certainly," replied Agnes. "He is very handsome, and all that, of course; but I hope he has learned to look at the bright side of human nature in the sunny lands he has visited: the dark and gloomy was his taste before he left Lisfinn."

"No libel on an absentee, I beg," said his grandfather, archly. "Gerald's taste was the beautiful and sublime—he spent his mornings poring over old books, his evenings, climbing those craggy hills yonder, listening to the wild tales of the Geraldine, from that half-crazed Milesian, Corny MacCarthy—and his nights were divided between the moon and the owls; so, I told him in a pet I would never miss his charming society if he went abroad, though I have often felt since, as I sat in this deserted room, looking out on the broad lands before me, that I would joyfully cease to be their master, could I hear the voice of the last of my race, in these old halls—could I

but see my noble boy, once again, to bless him, ere I go hence, and be no more seen."

The old man closed his eyes, as he pronounced slowly the last words, leaned back in the large arm-chair in which he sat, whilst over his features flitted an expression of deep, mental suffering, that appeared, in the eyes of both his auditors, of too sacred a character to disturb, by a single observation ; the reverie was but momentary, by a strong effort he seemed to have controlled his inward thought, and starting from his recumbent posture, gaily exclaimed—

"I have brought tears into your pretty eyes, Miss Agnes, and deserve to be banished from ladies' society for the next month ; but the news of my poor boy's return has upset me, so I will take a turn on the terrace, and leave the Colonel to tell you, my dear child, all about your old playfellow."

This arrangement was acted on so rapidly by her host, that Agnes could offer, even if she so wished, no objection; and she then learned from her companion, that his acquaintance with Gerald had commenced some time before, when the former was making an excursion through the Greek Islands, while the Colonel's regiment was lying at Corfu; that, in a boating excursion, the boat happened to upset, not far from land, and that Fitzgerald, who could not swim, was saved through his exertion; the Colonel made light of the part he played in the transaction, and described Gerald's gratitude as far exceeding his services on the occasion; being so near the shore, there was little or no danger, though the circumstance led to a great degree of intimacy, so that they became inseparable; and the Colonel obtaining leave of absence at the time, they visited together most of the Greek islands, also the classic shores of Italy; and after staying a short time at Rome, Gerald set out for Vienna, where he

wintered, projecting a tour northward the following Spring, whilst his friend returned to his regiment, and supposed Gerald enjoying the beauties of Petersburgh, when he received a letter the day previously, dated from Brussels, announcing his intention of returning to Ireland, at once. This letter was necessarily delayed from not being sent direct to his present quarters, so that Gerald might hourly be expected at Lisfinn, without being at all aware his friend was quartered in its neighbourhood.

Agnes had many questions to ask about her former acquaintance, and though she learned little that was unknown to her before, still she continued to listen, and her companion to describe and dwell on the many high and noble qualities that distinguished their mutual friend, and regret the unaccountable eccentricity that darkened, as it were with its shadow, a naturally gifted and generous mind.

The Colonel described him, at those times, as one who withdrew all attention

from surrounding objects, no matter how attractive soever they might be, gloomily wrapping himself up in his own thoughts, and disdaining alike the amusement offered to him by a passing acquaintance, or the sympathy evinced towords him by an attached friend. No place was exempt from these fits of abstraction; the voice of royalty at such times was unheard; the smile of beauty was unheeded; he stood an isolated being in the crowded halls of the noble and the gay, wondered at, and admired, for the versatility of manner, that now treated with haughty reserve, equal and superior, the next hour fascinating both with the inexhaustible resources of a highly gifted and cultivated mind, gilding each subject he conversed on, whether grave or gay, wiih the sparkles of his own genius. The powerful ascendancy of no common mind sweeping away all prejudice his unsocial hour might have left on the minds of those who listened, and impressing them instead, with the conviction, that

they had conversed with one, on whom nature bestowed a master-key to the human heart; and with the waywardness often attendant on that talismanic power, he chose to use it at his mercy and his will. Such was the description given by his friend, and when Agnes recalled her recollection of him during the last year of their acquaintance, she found it true in every particular ; this waywardness of disposition had not displayed itself in his boyhood. It was some short time previous to his mother's death those fits of abstraction were first observed in him, and after that event, they became so frequent, that his grandfather was the first to propose his trying the effect of change of air and scene, to remove the deep gloom that hung over a naturally cheerful mind. Talking in this way of Gerald, Agnes almost forgot the party she had come with, to the Castle, and the sound of her aunt O'Brady's voice in the next room was the first thing to bring to her recollection, the *desagrémens* of the

morning, a painful sense of having acted with some degree of impropriety, though she could not exactly define to what amount, rushed across her mind, as she pictured to herself, her aunt discovering her *tete-à-tete* with the very person against cultivating whose acquaintance she had lectured her so severely but a few hours before. As these thoughts passed rapidly in review before Agnes, she colored so violently, and looked so hopelessly distressed that the watchful eye of her companion read, in her involuntary agitation, as the sound of her aunt's voice became each moment more and more distinct, a wish on her niece's part, just then, to avoid, if possible, an interview. Without giving utterance to this opinion, he acted on it promptly Leaning forward towards Agnes, he said rapidly, without raising his eyes to her face.

"Perhaps, Miss Power, you would wish to see the housekeeper again before joining your party ?"

Rising at the same time, and opening a

door at the opposite side from where her aunt's voice was heard, held the open door in his hand, while Agnes passed through with a quick, flurried step, not daring to raise her downcast eyes to his, that continued fixed on her receding figure, as she flew, rather than walked through the gallery, until its terminating door shut her from his view; he then gently closed the one he stood at, and advanced towards the party in the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XI.

ANTICS AND ANTIQUITIES.

HERE the party, bound for the Hermitage, were assembled under the *chaperoning* care of Mrs.O'Brady; her eldest daughter, totally forgetful that her name figured in the parish register, five-and-thirty years before, was turning over the leaves of a book of engravings, with the sentimental air of sweet fifteen, and pointing out to Lieutenant Jennings, who stood with a very silly look beside her, some of the most delightful spots in the world, "to wile away a honeymoon," while her sister, Lucy and

Captain Grant took possession of a conversation stool, which, from some odd whim of its inventor, besides the advantage of only holding two, and those *vis-à-vis*, had also a rocking movement ; this ingenious device of the *artiste*, keeping the pair in a kind of sea-saw motion, very acceptable to a free-born American, or a young gentleman just parted from his hobby-horse. Though some years had elapsed since the Captain had taken that enlivening exercise, still he seemed wonderfully pleased with his rocking-stool and companion, while Lucy, a fine showy-looking girl, who, besides loving a hearty laugh for its own sake, always indulged in that healthful exercise out of a special regard to a handsome set of teeth ; who, disdaining to be peered at, through a cold measured smile, delighted to burst open their vermillion boundary, and display their pearly beauties, with a long, loud, and what some fastidious folks might deem a true, genuine, hoyden laugh—on the present occasion the young lady indulged

in her favorite pastime, unrestrained, her companion's *bon mots*, and ludicrous remarks, at all times, would command an uproarious burst of mirth from Lucy, but when she now glanced at his pursy figure, its rotund dimensions squeezed into a space, that might accommodate a slim, growing boy, but certainly was never intended to sustain the burly proportions of its present occupant, rocking to and fro, with a Bacchus like expression of countenance, bearing a strong resemblance to the full orb, so eloquently described by "young Norval," as lighting him in his first foray, with perhaps this slight difference, that the outline of the far famed man in the moon, was a thought less distinct, than the features of the Captain, which, Falstaff-like, nearly obliterated by his ample and inflated cheek, the merry twinkle of two dark, sunken spots that served for eyes, and a small aperture that answered the purposes of a mouth, with a round hillock of flesh, that lay between

these distinguishing features, were aught that appeared to mar the smooth equality of his rubicund visage.

Lucy, in laughing at the comical-looking being before her, lost her balance; and, in trying to recover it, set the seat rocking so violently as to oblige her to jump off, leaving her companion alone, but not in his glory, whirling about at a tremendous pace, something like an infuriated wind-mill; the increasing velocity of his motion flinging him at length into mid-air, and, fortunately for his cranium, in his descent, coming right against his Colonel, who at this moment entered the drawing-room. The explanations on all sides prevented the enquiries Mrs. O'Brady would otherwise have made on that gentleman's sudden and unexpected appearance, and before the laughter and confusion, consequent on the Captain's upset, had subsided, Agnes and her host made their appearance, and in the general greeting, she escaped the observation of her

aunt, and found herself listening to the Colonel giving a very laughable description to Sir Maurice of the gymnastic evolutions of his Light Infantry officer. None laughed louder, or longer, than that gentleman himself; he never desired a more enviable position in society than affording amusement to the company he mixed with —he cared not to be called its *butt*, his good temper and social qualities, with a keen sense of all that was ridiculous, either in himself or others, ensured him in every party to be considered the best fellow amongst them, so, while he kept his companion's jaws distended with laughter, he cared little who possessed their respect or grave approval. Lucy's early appreciation of his *buffo* qualities, and the loud laugh she bestowed on his harlequin efforts to amuse, completely won his heart, and amongst the three sisters, she could boast of the most sincere admirer in the gallant 5—th.

In the meantime Sir Maurice had con-

sented to accompany the party to the Hermitage, and with the politesse and gallantry of the old school, did the honours of Lisfinn; he led the party through the principal apartments, and pointed out to their notice what he considered most worthy of attention—the old castle was in itself a place of much interest. In feudal times it was one of those strong-holds of the arbitrary chieftains of that day, possessing considerable strength; and in the middle ages it was equally remarkable for the taste and splendour of its outward and interior decoration; the former was displayed in that bold florid style of architecture which characterised the period, and the latter was exhibited in some fine specimens of the olden school of painting, in the curiously carved oak wainscoting of the principal apartments; the mantel-pieces, on which were raised in relief the arms of the Geraldine, the ceilings and walls decorated with the proud banners that race had won amidst storm and strife—all were in their turn

commented and dwelt upon by their host, with that proud kindling of eye, and lofty elevation of look, that proclaimed him no degenerate son of a line that had bearded kings, and flung down the gauntlet in the very presence of the arbitrary daughter of Henry the Eighth—and, as the old knight now stood in the lofty entrance hall, with its groined arches of black marble, its deeply indented Gothic windows, through whose stained panels streamed a dim religious sort of light, that lit up the grim portraits of his ancestors, their glittering armour reposing beside them, all felt that the present representative was no unworthy son of such a race; the noble scantling of the man, deep, broad-chested, the unstooped shoulder, and firm step, though the allotted years of vigour had passed over him, the threescore years and ten, failed in causing that step to falter—or dimming the glance of that falcon eye—it still sparkled with all the fire of five-and-twenty, as he proudly pointed out the objects around him, its

lordly look of command, tempered with the *bonhommie*, and lively humour that characterised his other features—while the proud bearing of his figure harmonised well amidst the trophies and memorials of a race, whose history is identified with that of their country, whose name is still borne by its highest peer. The exterior of the castle next engaged their attention, and as Sir Maurice led the way through the court-yard, he stopped suddenly on perceiving a man advancing towards him, wrapped in one of those large loose coats worn by the peasantry, of a dark blue colour, descending to the ankle, and enveloping the throat, which we suppose caused some one to describe this *cotemar*, or outside coat, as a fit house for an assassin, but which we are inclined to think was adopted by our countrymen, as the African wears his *bernoose*, to conceal the scanty supply of inner garments, or as we once heard a Munster man explain the matter, and it is a truly Irish way of accounting for this singular

costume, "that they wore it in winter to keep out the cold, and in summer to keep off the heat," no slight recommendation to a people who are obliged, by necessity, to make everything answer more purposes than the one originally intended.

The man we have described as wearing this garment, on the present occasion, displayed little else of his costume, save a pair of unbound brogues, and coarse yarn stockings, whilst on his head was placed a half worn felt hat, low-crowned and broad-brimmed, concealing the upper part of his features, but which was now removed on the approach of Sir Maurice, and displayed a countenance on which time and care had done its work, but failed in obliterating traces of manly beauty that still marked thin sunken features, expressive in no common degree, of a haughty, uncontrolled spirit.

In returning the courteous salutation of the knight, he wore the air of an equal, more than that of an inferior, and the

grace with which he replaced his hat on his head, would not have disgraced a courtier ; he had passed over sixty summers, but a casual observer would have added some dozen to his years; his figure was tall, gaunt and slightly stooped ; his countenance bore the traces of much mental, and bodily suffering; yet not sufficient to subdue the look of pride, almost amounting to scorn, that dwelt on his sharp, emaciated features, whilst the long silvery hair that fell at either side of his pallid face, gave a patriarchal character to his appearance, and threw an air of wildness over the whole contour of the man.

"Well, Mac Carthy," said the knight, "you are the very man I want; you can tell the history of this old castle much better than I can, to those ladies and gentlemen; fore George, I forget more than half the legends and stories that are told of Lisfinn."

"That oughtn't to be, Sir Maurice," returned Mac Carthy. "You're left in the

ould lair, an' ye ought to be able to tell ov those who were in the cover afore ye."

"Oh! I leave that to you, Corney," returned the knight, laughing, "I know you will do it well, for one day or another you expect to get a share of the forfeited estates, by remembering the tradition of every old ruin in the country."

"An' who has a better right to them, Sir Maurice," said the peasant. "Is it Cromwell's soldiers, or those who have broken faith, an' a union lord for a pedigree, if there was wance jistice fur Ireland; are those the title deeds to keep the Mac Carthy More out ov his right, oh! no," and the old man's eye lighted up, "we would soon shew them then that a Sassenach King or Queen had no right to confiscate the estates of an Irish prince; an' whin the ould race has its own again, we'll bate um into the say, as Saint Pathrick did their ancesthors, the toads an' sarpints; an' then, an' not 'till then, we'll be shut ov all the venemous

reptils that pizin ould Ireland, since the days ov Strongbow an' Cromwell."

The ladies of the party laughed at this effusion, for Corny Mac Carthy was known to them all, but the officers looked utterly at fault, and did not well know whether to set down Mr. Mac Carthy as an ex-Irish king, or as a raving maniac. Mr. Foster inclined to the former opinion, and feeling curious to ascertain the sentiments of fallen royalty, in regard to the restoration of legitimate right, surveyed Corny with a curious, investigating look, and addressing him with the air of a man determined fairly to argue the point, said—

"You do not mean to say that if Ireland had what you call justice, that Irish property would be taken from the English who fairly purchased it, by either service or money, and given up or restored to the descendants of those who forfeited it centuries before."

Mac Carthy turned on the speaker a scornful glance, at the same time exclaiming—

"I mane to say that self-same thing, and to prove it too, by a proposition. Suppose your wages for keeping the people down by the Insurrection Act, was to be the ould castle we're in, do ye think the Fagarrald would sit tamely down, an' let an English king dispose ov his property! no beganays! he'd fight for it as his father's did before him; an' his seed, breed, an' generation would rise to a man to turn the stranger and the Sassenach out ov the walls of Lisfinn."

"In one part of your proposition you are quite correct, Corny," remarked Sir Maurice, "for it would cost me a struggle to part with Lisfinn; but your argument does'nt hold good in all, for I never forfeited my lands, but have always been a loyal subject to my king, which those who forfeited theirs were not, though the country had sworn allegiance to England at the time."

"A bad oath is better broken nor kept anny day," returned Corny, "an' moreover to an ungrateful misthress as she has been

always to the poor Irish. Take your own case, Sir Maurice; ye'erself, an' ye'er yeomen, were out in ninety eight, an' what thanks did ye get for id; ould Sir Thomas, that was a rebel in his heart, an' a thraytor to the men that thrusted him, was b'liev'd afore ye. You tould the gover'ment to give the people fair play, an' thin they'd list'n to rayson; but Sir Thomas was for the cat-o-nine-tail, an' the thriangle, an' 'tis his advice was taken. 'Down wid the green,' was the cry wid him thin, tho' he was a sworn man himself; an' if a man bud wrote a letter in French, he was tied to the cart tail an' flogged thro' the streets ov Clonmel; bud they wor bint on carryin' the Union, an' beganays, in these days the people should be rebels whether they liked id or no."

"Well, those days are past and gone," returned Sir Maurice, "and we won't talk of them now Corney."

"Bud why do I mintion um, Sir Maurice Fagarrald, but jist to bring to ye'er mind

that the innocent man gits no quarter frum the English, he may as well join aginst um first as last, fur they'll parsecute him into harum wan time or another, fur by dad, wid them, the man that sells his counthry is the boy on the gap, sure to get whatever's goin."

"Well, well, Corney, for all that, you sha'nt make a rebel of me in my old age. Man and boy I have stood by my king and constitution."

"An' more's the pity," chimed in Mac Carthy before Sir Maurice could finish the sentence, "for ye wor a good warrant to stick by the people too, an' bad as they are, there's not a man among um that id injure a hair ov ye'er head, or call ye out ov ye'er name frum wan ind ov the country to the other, an' that's a big word in these bad times."

"I can't complain of them, I can't complain," repeated the old knight, "but those English gentlemen can of our Irish manners

keeping them looking at these old towers, without telling them who either built them or burnt them before now."

"Ye'll have ye'er jest, Sir Maurice, to the last, an' the best ov the argument afther all," returned Mac Carthy, with an approach to a grim smile, that relaxed for a moment the disdainful and ascetic cast of his features. Then turning to the party of visitors, he nodded in the direction of a grey Tower, whose crumbling battlements and antiquated appearance gave it a right to be considered the father of the building, and leaning his back against a projecting buttress, while he folded his arms on his breast, slipping either hand into the opposite sleeve of his ample coat, his countenance expressing formal civility towards those he addressed, and an evident wish to display his own oratorical powers, and impress his auditory, at once, with his self-importance, and that of the subject he was about to dilate on,

began in an oracular tone, suited vastly more to fix the attention of a large assembly than necessary to attract that of the few individuals who stood immediately around him.

CHAPTER XII.

A LEGEND OF OPHALY.

"WELL then, ladies an' gintlemen, this same tower was built by John Fitzthomas, Lord ov Ophaly, in commemoration ov havin' conquered William Vasey, Earl ov Kildare, and that widout sthrikin' a single blow. The Lord ov Ophaly was a mighty brave man, nathur afeerd ov God or the ould boy, (the cross atween us an' all harum;) but, tho' he had the will to kill all afore him, he was bud a wakely body afther all; and what does he do, bud he

up and he sthrikes a bargin wid the inimy ov his sowl.

"'Giv' me,' sez he, 'the power to break annything that stands afore me in this world, an' ye'er welkim to the revarshan ov me in the next.'

"'A bargain,' sez ould Nick, quite off-handed.

"An' wid that he shuk hands wid Lord John, an' gives him sich a squeeze, that the next thing he tuk a hoult ov, was, by the same token, a smith's anvil, wid the smith himsilf standin' hard by, puttin' a shoe on his lordship's horse, the poor baist loosen'd rampaugin' the ground, wid the dint ov vexation, all the time his masther was discoorsin' the divil. Well, be that as it will —Lord John began to think anny way ov the *pawgraw*, the black villin had jist given him, an' he up, and he thries his own hand on the anvil—may I nivir die in sin, but it broke atween his fingers, like a mashed praty—whin the smith seen his anvil flyin' about in smithereens, he cried out *Mille a murther* to the naburs, bud

Lord John bid him whisht, and tould him he had the worst ov id, fur the blessid iron cut his hand straight across, an' frum that day, to the day ov his death, signs on, he nivir could stir aythur his thumb or little finger—an, I'll be bound, nivir touch'd iron agin as long as he lived. Well, the wind ov the word went abroad, an' bad luck to the wan gintle or simple would say *boo* to Lord John ; bud anny way, he had an ould grudge to the Earl ov Kildare—an' he sits down an' writes him a challenge. The Earl was a mighty cute man, and fond ov his mammy's calf-skin moreover, so he sends him a civil message, declining the honour his lordship was so mighty kind as to offer him, an' takes himsilf out ov the counthry, as fast as the best horse in his stable could carry him, and, by all accounts, that was a good wan —away wid Lord John to the coort, an' he up an' he tells his story ov the Earl ; an', bedad, there was nobody there to conthradict him. The king was mighty indignant

intirely, at havin' sich a story go abroad ov wan ov his lords; an' made a proclamation that iv the Earl ov Kildare didn't appear to fight the Lord ov Ophaly aginst a sartin day, that his title an' possessions would be given to Lord John; so, beganays, frum that day to this, the Earl nivir came back; an' manny's the wan said, the good people made away wid him; bud whether they did or no, mysilf can't tell; bud anny way, *Shawn a lauve lauther*,* was Earl ov Kildare, and built this tower, moreover, to commemorate the victhory that nivir as much as cost him a single blow."

"But it did his descendents to defend," remarked Sir Maurice, "when those worthy ancestors of yours, the MacCarthys, of *Slieve na riag*, burnt all before them. The father and grandfather were slain," continued he, addressing the party around

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* John of the strong hand.

him; "their retainers fled from the castle in a fit of consternation, leaving the infant heir of Kildare alone in a cradle. A being below the human and above the brute species—an ape, kept in the family, with sense or instinct, if you will, seized on the child, and carried it to the top of the highest tower you see, parading it round and round the battlements until the frightened domestics returned, then descending with his charge, laid safely in his cradle, he that was afterwards Earl of Kildare, surnamed, *nuppagh*, or the ape; and his descendants have not been ungrateful," continued the old knight, pointing to the arms of the Fitzgerald, carved over the hall of entrance, displaying two apes as supporters, with the appropriate motto—*crom-a-boo*—I burn."

"There's an ould story afore that same coat ov arms was put there, Sir Maurice," said the old man, with the air of a privileged and veteran story-teller, jealous of being outdone, "an' 'tis tould ov the purtiest tower among um, aye bedad, an' ov the

purtiest tower in all Munsther into the bargin, an' that's the wan standin' straight forenent ye, 'twas riz be the *Gubbawn sair* himsilf, the same that built the fine ould abbey of Holy Cross, the finest mason that iver laid stone and morthar togither; fur the wan stone that was laid by day, there was ten more to the back ov id by night; seein' the good people stood to him fur some handy turn he did um wan time, they were in hoult, an' let people say what they will, they bate the Christhins hollow fur remimberin a kindness. Well, be that as it will, the story I am going to tell ye, ov the Tower afore us, is as thrue as the blessed Gospel itself, an' come down from father to son, an' was tould me whin I was but a *garsoon*, be my grandfather, up at Ballycurnane, an' manny a wan heerd it beside myself; for it was he that kep' the open house, the finest ov atin an' dhrikin, wid lashins an' lavins for the *boccagh* an' the beggar. 'Cut, an' come again,' was the word at Ballycurnane. His avenue gate

niver was shut, laist the people id say he was barrin um out; so he made sure ov plinty ov the finest company, mornin', noon, nn' night, an' whin he wint to glory, God rest his sowl, his wake held in id fur a week; and manny's the sore skull was afther his berrin; for the licker was as plinty as ditch wather in id, an' they flocked in id frum far an' near, seein, he was mighty well liked among the people, an' was, moreover, wan ov the ould race, a raal gintleman, bred, born an' raired among um."

"But the story of the *Gubbawn Sair's* Tower, Corny," said the old knight, impatiently, these ladies and gentlemen would rather hear of it, than of your grandfather's funeral, that is buried, if I remember aright, more than fifty years ago."

"Something about that time, Sir Maurice," returned Corny, whose memory loved to dwell on all that related to his ancestors, "bud if I was up at the house, I could tell ye to the day, for I have id in black an' white, an' his will into the bargain, an' that was

the will that bet the world; the Lord Chancellor himself tould my father, God rest his soul, there was as good as nine-an'-twenty law shoots in the body ov id, an' that signs on't would take the life ov ten sthrong men to thry um all, and sure enough, id took that ov my father, anny way, an' a good part ov my own; an' if there was anything like fair play in the coorts above, the law shoot would last for manny's the year yet. But there's little justice, at all, at all, fur the poor man; an' afore half the law arguments an' orashuns could be discoorsed about id, the ejectment came down ; myself often thought they cut it short on purpose, the money growing slack wid us, though we riddled the ground, an' sould the last baist we had, to keep the lawyers' tongues wagging; but all wouldn't do, down came the orther to the Sheriff to sazye and sell all that was left to Mac Carthy More, ov his ould estates; but sayin' an' doin are two things; an' fur five years, we kept the forcible possession in Ballycurnane, an' would keep it our own

to this day, bud for that black thraytor that bethrayed us, he seen nothin' bud frindship from me an' mine, bud, like his father afore him, he sowld the pass on the house that sheltered him; and, sooner or later, Dan Wetherell, you'll get your desarvins from the hand ov Corney Mac Carthy; an' the mother that bore me, if she stood on the airth again, couldn't save ye in that day."

The old man's eyes flashed with almost the light of insanity, as he uttered these words, while his clenched hand was raised, as if to strike the object of his fierce hate in the vacant space before him. The old knight reproved him in a grave but still kind tone of voice for this burst of violence, and reminding him that they were all impatient to hear the story of the Gubbawn's Tower. Mac Carthy, at once recalled from his own peculiar wrongs, shrugged his shoulders with the air of a true Milesian, about to narrate a story of the *good ould time*, began in a tone and manner much more peaceable in its

character, than he had worn but a few moments before.

"Wisha thin, Sir Maurice, you shall have id an welkim, and who has a better right to hear id than ye'ersilf, fur id consarns them that are near enough to ye—bud that's nathor here nor there—the buildin was finished, and the *gubbawn sair* was mighty proud ov his job, sure enough, an' the Fagarrald, an' all his people come down to look at id, an' among the foremost was the ould bard that follow'd the lord, and whin the *Gubbawn* began boastin' like ov himself, an' the fine buildin' afore um, that he riz in less time than a man would a mud cabin, the ould bard got jealous in himsilf whin he seen the lord so taken wid the *Gubbawn*, an' beganays, the bard was a mighty remarkable man—his hair was down below his shoulders, as white as the driven snow, his eyes like two red balls ov fire from the dint ov cryin, fur the Faggarrald himself nivir took to frettin, bud kep

the ould fellow fur that same, an' to play fur the company while the lord was atin' his supper, and to strike up afore him, an' his followers whin they wint to the battle, and keep up the finest ov music while they wor batin all before um: this wasn't all the ould chap had to do; bud afther the fightin' was over he had to *keen* them that were gone, an' fur all the world, the music he play'd was like the cry ov the *banshee*, an' not wan among um was the betther fur hearin id, or would like to hear id agin ; but now what does he do, bud to take the shine out ov the fairy man, he up, an' he tchunes his silver harp he always thravell'd with, an *na bocklish*, bud 'tis he that *keen'd* all the fine men that wer' to be massacreed widin the four walls the *Gub-bawn* was so proud ov, an' the fire an' soord that was to come wan day or another on um, that bad luck to the bit; bud the Fagarrald in a fury, ordher'd his people not to lave wan stone upon another, sooner

than sich a *mee yaw* should come upon him, an' his ; well the *Gubbawn* was a wondtherful sinsible man, an' keeps his timper to himsilf, an' sez he, mighty civilly to the bard,

"May be sir, you'd be afther lettin us look at that harp ov yours, fur it's a mighty purty instrument, an' I niver in all my born days seen the like afore, wid so manny nate kays on id."

"Well, the *Gubbawn* was the boy fur mixin' the morthar, an' bad cess to id; bud he plasther'd the ould lad so well, an' talked so simple in himself, that he up an' hands him the harp, *bathershin* if he didn't knock music out ov id, the likes was nivir heerd afore, an' wid a mighty knowing look he asks the bard to favour the company wid a tchune; he'd refuse him iv he daare, fur like manny a wan beside him, he liked to be tellin' the bad news betther nor the good, bud the mason put the spell on him, so out id come, mighty much aginst his

will, an' the thradishion sez the ould sinner died ov vexation the minnit the last word was out ov his head, praise be to the Blessid Virgin, fur he always intinded to bequaythe the prophecy to his successor, bud the *Gubbawn* was too manny fur him, an' made him tell the good news fur wance in his life, an so spare the buildin', an' its manny's the long night id kep me awake thryin' to make the sinse out ov that prophecy, bud thanks to the mother ov Heaven an' the little larnin' that was given me, it's now as plain as a pike staff, bud like the first knowledge that come into the world, in the Garden ov Aiden, it brings throuble to them that makes id out, an' signs on my own end is fairly foretould in id."

This announcement caused a stare of astonishment from the whole party, but Mac Carthy, no way abashed, repeated in a slow, solemn voice the following doggrel, with a countenance that attested his own faith in what he uttered.

When the Gerald shall cease to rive,
And with Donald's race shall wive,
Peace and plenty then shall begin
To dwell in the Castle and around Lisfinn,
When the last of the race that burnt it first
By the Sassenagh's hand shall be laid in the dust.

CHAPTER XIII.

ADVERSE OPINIONS ON IRISH POLICY.

As MacCarthy pronounced the last line, he perceived another had joined the party of listeners around him, and a dark scowl passed across the old man's face as his eyes rested, for a moment, on the figure of our old acquaintance, Major Power, who, advancing into the midst of the circle, saluted them with—

"Gentlemen, I am glad to see you, but would be much more so if I found you not listening to a noted outlaw, that escaped the gallows through the clemency of the

Government, and who now has the hardihood in the very court-yard of a Baronet, and Grand Juror of the county, to spout rebellion to a party of his Majesty's officers; but, as a magistrate, I am called on to silence such a miscreant; and I warn you," continued he, addressing MacCarthy, "to take yourself off from my presence, or I'll commit you for an attempted breach of the peace, trying to stir up people's minds to rebellion, by telling such improbable stories of what never has happened, nor never will."

MacCarthy replied to this by a look of bold defiance his ancestors might have worn to a foe they could crush, but considered too contemptible to exterminate; and drawing up his tall figure to its full height, exclaimed in a tone of bitter irony,

"The dunghill cock crows loudest when there's no danger. The coward in a fair cries out 'Boys, don't hould me.' An' Major Power, whin there's plinty to save him, attacks an ould man that id wish to

pass him by ; but let him take care, the worm that's trampled in the dust has still a kick left in id, an' MacCarthy More, may turn on the man that wrongs him, whin Major Power has naythur Sir Maurice Fagarrald, nor this company to back him; an' good mornin' to ye ladies an' gintlemen, an' wan that saw better days, is obleeged to ye for ye'er civility, an' knows how to remimber friend an' foe, whin they laist expect id."

Then bowing to all, save the Major, the old man strided through the court-yard, leaving some of the party much displeased at the disagreeable interruption that gentleman had caused; amongst the number, Sir Maurice who was the first to speak.

"You will pardon me for saying it, Major, but I think you are very injudicious, to say the least, in your treatment of Mac Carthy. The man has strong passions, and you rouse them against yourself by taxing him with what he is really not guilty of—disloyalty ; like most of his class, he is full

of prejudices, harmless, if not unnecessarily opposed ; but I would rather overcome those prejudices, by the higher order showing kindness to a people, whose patience, under privation, has become a proverb, and by introducing a proper system of education amongst them, holding out a reward to industry, and encouraging manufacture, withdraw their attention from the past, and teach them to enjoy present blessings, and be thankful."

"An impossibility, Sir Maurice," returned the Major ; "in the Irish language there is no such word as gratitude, nor has it ever existed in the hearts of the Irish people."

"Irish history contradicts that assertion ; in my own experience, through life, I can practically deny it; but, in most instances, what have the people to be thankful for?—ignorance and poverty ! The former leads them to believe all that is pernicious to their temporal or eternal welfare; the latter plunges them into crime.

Men that have no stake to lose, become reckless—the *wild justice of revenge* is the only law they recognize. The gentry, by setting themselves in array against the peasantry, arm them against themselves; all confidence in their natural protectors is lost; they fall an easy prey to the demagogue and incendiary; these, to accomplish their own vile purposes, work on the inflammable passions of a mercurial people; self-respect is then at an end, all moral and social improvement is blasted, and a people whose mental powers, and local advantages might have placed them amongst the happy and the free, are benighted, debased, and poverty-stricken by the ungenerous brand placed on them by those whose high privilege it was, as well as bounden duty, to ameliorate and civilize their condition."

"You always get warm on this subject, Sir Maurice, so we will wave it, for the present, first entering my protest against your view of the matter. The Irish gentry, in my mind, have but one fault to

answer for, and that is, not forcing from Government stronger powers to keep the people in order. I would hang and transport them until I left no one in the country to commit mischief, but the women and children."

The advocate of the commons was about, indignantly, to reply, when the Tower clock struck five, the hour of tryste at the Hermitage, and Mrs. O'Brady gladly availed herself of its friendly warning, to interrupt a conversation that she knew, from former experience, would be likely to end in Sir Maurice withdrawing himself from her brother-in-law's society; so now, with one of her blandest smiles, reminded the gentlemen of the hour, and securing the arm of the good old knight, led the way through a very beautifully planted demesne, to the appointed place of rendezvous. Colonel Saville had withdrawn himself from the party when Mac Carthy left the court-yard, and following his steps, overtook the old man as he crossed the ancient fosse and draw-bridge,

the former filled up, and the latter converted into a solid causeway.

The Colonel addressed him with some passing observation, until they were out of sight of those in the court-yard, then, wishing him good-bye, slipped a piece of gold into the peasant's hand. Had a scorpion stung him, it could not have caused a greater revulsion in his look and manner.

"I am no common beggar, sir, or beggar's son," was Corny's reply to this silent offer of kindness, as he indignantly returned it to its owner, "an' you that have the looks ov a born gintleman yerself, ought to have some respect for the dacent blood in others."

The young Englishman shrunk, abashed, before the stern rebuke conveyed in the words and manner of a man he deemed no better than a peasant, and vainly attempted to apologize, without at all understanding why he ought to do so.

"There are plinty of poor crathurs to take your money, an' thank ye for givin it," interrupted Corny, "but the Mac Carthy More isn't fallen so low as to be behoulden to the charity ov the strangher ; the sense an' larnin' God gave him, keeps the cabin over himsilf an' the last ov the beef-eaters ov his family, an' whin he dies, the finest tomb in the ould Abbey ov Holy Cross opens to resave him; your counthrymen can't chate him ov *that* tho' they didn't lave me or mine a sod ov land that we could call our own. Take the best horse on the curragh, an' gallop him iv ye can, ov a long summer day, round what belongs to the Mac Carthy More, iv he had his own back agin; bud that's naythur here nor there, blood is sthronger than wather, an' goold afther all, can't make the gintleman," after pronouncing this truism, so contraverted in the present day.

Mr. Mac Carthy turned on his heel, leaving the Colonel in a state of painful embarrassment, at having his good inten-

tions so completely misunderstood; he would willingly have offered apology and explanation for unintentionally wounding the feelings of the meanest individual; but he felt puzzled to account for the indignation evinced by a man of Mac Carthy's appearance, at his proffered bounty, and determined to talk the matter over with Sir Maurice, who seemed on such friendly terms with this extraordinary old man. As he joined the party, in the grounds, an opportunity presented itself. The knight first laughed heartily, then looking ominously grave, said—

"I am sorry this should have occurred; Mac Carthy is revengeful to a degree, where he considers any insult is offered to his rank in life. Peasant as he is, his ancestors were princes, and the lower order, who live more in the past than in the present, always take the part of the fallen, and treat him with greater deference than they do the man of many acres. Still Mac Carthy, notwithstanding all his pride and

foolish prejudice, is a shrewd man, and perceived well enough, I dare say, that you meant him a kindness, though his spirit was hurt at its being proffered by a stranger. Be assured, notwithstanding all the Major said against Irish gratitude, he'll pay you off one time or another."

"Aye," returned the Colonel, smiling "after his country's fashion, I suppose, with a soft word and a stone in a stocking, a hearty shake hands and a knock down."

"Likely enough, Colonel, if he thought you dealt him insult or wrong; but nothing more unlikely in the world, if he took it as it was meant. An act of kindness from a stranger, bestowed on him through neither fear nor treachery."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HERMITAGE.

They had now reached an open space, in front of the ivy covered building, that served in former days as a place of penance for the Geraldine, when his conscience led him to seek, in solitude and devotion, a temporary balm from its galling pressure ; and according to the superstition of the age, offer an atonement to that Heaven he had outraged, by voluntarily withdrawing himself from a world, whose votaries, in all ages, have found, sooner or later, to be more or less vanity and vexation of spirit. Deeds of

rapine and of strife were in those ages frequently succeeded by acts of mortification to the body, while the pride of the unhumbled spirit, took only another form. The sword of the chieftain flaming first in the battle field, gave way to the cross of the hermit, the subjugation of the rights and property of others—the aim of the former, while the sandalled anchorite sought that more subtle but not less powerful sovereignty, the homage of mankind. The principle of conquest in both were alike; the weapons of their warfare only differed. And the baron in his castle-hall, subject to no will, save his own, surrounded with all the pomp and glitter of a feudal age, was less respected and feared by the majority of mankind than the lowly hermit in his cell, performing the self-righteous acts of fast and vigil, humbling his lacerated body in the dust, that his spirit might be the more exalted amongst the sons of men. This secluded spot was chosen on the present occasion by no ascetic, The lady who fixed on

it was decided in her choice by considering, with her usual prescience, that it possessed many ingredients necessary to the comfort of a *fête champetre*, seclusion and shade, with some delightful walks in its immediate vicinity—a delicious spring that perhaps induced the solitary in former days to build his cell near, now containing a less picturesque, but in the lady's estimation, far more useful personage, in the shape of an old servant, who took care of the building, and was expected, on the present occasion, to cook the salmon just caught from the blue waters of the Suir, its flavour heightened by the arbutus on which it was roasted, "a dainty dish fit to set before a king," rivalled only by that vegetable production, Irish by adoption, which now, the earliest of the season, in their light coloured jackets, smoked invitingly on the spread board, that extended under the friendly shade of a magnificent yew, rising in solitary grandeur, right in front of the building; its friendly shade, in former days, may be sup-

posed to have been dedicated to less carnal purposes, than at the present moment, where the substantial and desirable were happily blended, for with the tactics of an experienced general, Mrs. O'Brady had (to use her favourite dogma) "quartered on the enemy," by levying, *en passant*, the projected supplies, not only on the garden and larder but the cellar of Lisfinn. The well-covered table attested her diligence, and it now rewarded her praise-worthy exertions, by presenting a very inviting front, which most of the company present attacked, with a zeal and energy that would have sorely disconcerted the former abstemious occupant of the place.

After the slight bustle consequent on arranging such a party, Agnes found herself seated next the Colonel, he addressing her in that easy, confidential tone, an acqaintance of many years might have assumed, and her manner, marked by some slight restraint and embarrasment, at the recollection of her retreat from the boudoir,

though the subject was never alluded to by either, still the remembrance of it, by both, served to draw them more closely together and establish a sort of understanding between them, difficult to define, yet, perhaps, the most dangerous to the peace of a young, unsophisticated being like Agnes, that could possibly be indulged in. She felt that her opinion also of her Aunt and cousins was silently reciprocated by her companion, and with the warm sympathy of early girlhood, fancied that on other subjects they must also think alike; and what so dangerous to the young as a similarity of sentiment in one of the other sex; and oh, how doubly dangerous to the confiding, yet timid nature, who has hitherto, with shy reserve, shrunk from exposing feelings at variance with those of the majority around them, when they first hear one kindred spirit, with manly boldness, advocate the very sentiments that lie buried in the secret recesses of their own breasts.

For some weeks back had Agnes been

exposed to this danger, and she now listened, with thrilling interest, to a stranger addressing her in the language of friendly interest, such as a brother, who had braved the world's shock, might becomingly use to a young and sensitive sister, about to launch on its troubled waters—the unresisting gentleness of whose nature, exposed to the shoals and quick sands that beset her course—the rude and selfish natures, by which she was surrounded, —nor was the situation one of safety to Saville. His own master, from boyhood, he had never known a parent's care. An indulgent guardian and ample fortune had early placed him in the profession of his choice—his home, the mess table—his domestic circle, the officers that surrounded it—a naturally affectionate disposition narrowed within such a compass, devoted the best energies of its nature to that of his profession, and the regiment, whose colors he had carried at sixteen, he commanded at eight and twenty. In his varied and cam-

paigning life he had been thrown much in the society of women, but none amongst them elicited from the young soldier more than passing admiration ; there was something within him whispered that rank, beauty, and accomplishments did not come up to his standard of wedded happiness, and under it, he was determined not to wed. In his secret soul he felt that a love such as his, if once awakened, was worthy of something better ; and despite the beautiful, and fascinating beings that from time to time crossed his path, he still retained, at nine and twenty, his heart and his liberty. Marrying mammas considered him an eligible but impracticable man ; his brother officers held their Colonel invulnerable, as far as cupid was concerned, and he, himself, liked his present life too well to indulge a wish to change it. The beauty of Agnes had struck him at their first meeting, the *naïvete* of her unstudied manner had since attracted his attention, he looked on her as a mere beautiful child,

in whose speaking countenance he delighted to read the gentle, unworldly thoughts of one so fair and good; and without a fear for either her safety or his own, he sought to gain the confidence of her young heart, and win bright and happy smiles from the lovely, unconscious being beside him. Her aunt was just then too much engaged enjoying the good things before her, and endeavouring to obliterate from the mind of Sir Maurice any reminiscence of the Major's interrupion, to attend particularly to her niece, and the rest of the party, in discussing their dinner, overlooked their neighbours.

The Major's spirits seemed to revive at the dessert, for though he had done every justice to the viands, still he was what the fancy would call over crowed, until he perceived his worthy sister-in-law had been successful in her manœuvre, of conciliating Sir Maurice, and then all his wonted flippancy returned; he rattled and boasted in his usual bombastic style, relating sundry anecdotes of

his own life, in all of which he was sure to figure as the hero, whether personal valour or witty finesse was the theme on which he dilated—self, occupied the foreground, and what achievement could be narrated, which the unconscionable Major would not, in his own person, have out done. Captain Grant chanced to mention a circumstance that took place in his first campaign, where the bravery and presence of mind of a private, placed on picquet, saved a whole detachment from being cut off. Three of the enemy stole close to the English lines to reconnoitre their position, a weak one, if discovered ; all depended on the picquet; and the cool bravery of the man saved his companions ; he shot one, bayonetted a second, and with the butt end of his carbine knocked down the third man, who was creeping up the steep ascent, at the top of which he was placed.

CHAPTER V.

TRADITIONS OF "THE GALLANT TIPPERARY."

"A MERE nothing," remarked the Major, "compared to what happened me in 'The Tipperary,' when we were lying in Chester; there were two English regiments quartered with us there, at the time, and to show you what Irishmen can do, out of their own country, and what much finer fellows we were, than either of these regiments of the line, one of our officers laid a bet with one of their's that he'd get a man in 'The Tipperary' that would box six of their best men, one down another come on."

"John Bull said 'Done,' for the honour of his regiment; and big Bill Delaney, *the thresher*, was the man fixed on by Mandeville, of ours, (father to the young man you met at my house.) Well, the match came off in the barrack-square, with the officers of the three regiments looking on, and half the town of Chester to boot.

"Bill was a huge fellow—a real bully of a boy—and to be sure, how the Englishers did stare at him, as he threw aside his coat, and squared at his first man, shouting out

"'Sweet Tipperary for ever, and the sky over it.'

"He had him down while you'd say Jack Robinson, and before they could well look about them, the six were disposed of.

"The officers, to be sure, were very mad about it; but our own fellows had a glorious night, and drank Bill Delaney's health three times three before morning. Poor devil! he went to the bad after; he was starving a short time after the regiment was

disbanded; but I heard he took to night walking, and so put Mandeville and some other of our fellows against giving him any thing. But the best of it was, in Chester, after this match, scarcely a day passed without a fight between the privates of those English regiments, and the Tipperary boys, nor had they all the fun to themselves, for a dozen duels were fought in the space of three months amongst the officers —our fellows always cutting them out; so you may think we carried things with a very high hand. Well, I got a fever about this time, and was confined to my room for nearly a fortnight, when one morning, waking out of my sleep, I heard the soldiers at the old work in the street, fighting away for the bare life. I jumped up, and ran to the window, and there was Bill Delaney, and about half a dozen comrades, attacked by a whole company of the English regiment. The Tipperary boys retreated backwards through the narrow street; but their adversaries increased

every moment, and the town's people began to join them. The Irishmen had nothing for it but to run away, (and with the crowd that was scarcely possible) or fight to the last. A few moments more, and their account was settled. I looked round the room, it contained no weapon offensive or defensive. The very fire-irons had been removed—as in a raving fit, I had struck my nurse a few days before. Delay was death to the men of my own regiment outside, for if big Bill, the thresher, had the power of seven Goliahs in his single arm, he would have been overpowered by the numbers that now surrounded him, and I knew the moment he was down, it was all over with the rest. I placed my knee against the bottom post of the camp-bedstead—to wrench it asunder was the work of a moment; the next, the window was flung up, and my first landing was on a sort of booth, immediately in front of the house. One spring, and the street was gained. A lane was soon cleared before

me, with the formidable weapon in my hand ; would you believe it, gentlemen, the Tipperary boys never knew me, and small blame to them if they had; I had only a piece of a shirt on, for I lost more than half of it knocking the fellows down. By the time I sent them all flying before me, Bill Delaney closed on me. My blood was too much up to undeceive him as to who I was. I flung the bed-post at his backers, knocking them over like so many sparrows, and grappled with their leader. I was 'The Threshers' match at any time, but now nearly naked, with nothing for him to hold by. I was one too many for him, and watching my opportunity, tripped up his heels in no time, and giving him a heave over, sent him right bang through a shop window opposite to where we stood, outside shutters, window-frame and all, leaving a clear stage before me. I looked about for the bed-post, climbed the booth in a jiffey, and was safe under the blankets, before those in the street could look about them,

and from that day to the day I left the regiment, not a man among them ever knew who it was put a *quietus* on the line bullies, and broke Bill Delaney's thigh, into the bargain."

"I have heard," remarked Sir Maurice, with an incredulous smile, "some such story as that told of Mandeville, or *mad devil* as the people used to call him, once when he was with 'The Tipperary,' in England. He was a powerful, athletic man, and as I once heard him say of himself, 'up to anything, from pitch and tos s to manslaughter.'"

"Oh, poor Frank," returned the Major, "took the credit of it in the regiment, and he was heartily welcome to it, for my part. I lay snug in my bed for ten days after, and kept the secret to myself, laughing all the time, in my sleeve, at poor *mad devil's* boasting."

This gasconade, so characteristic of the Major, amused the party exceedingly. Their merriment much increased by Captain Grant's gravely sug-

gesting that this deadly encounter of the Militia Major, as it took place in hours dedicated to slumber, might, after all, be nothing more than a fevered vision or flitting dream."

"Dream," repeated the little man, with indignation, "Bill Delaney thought it no dream, when his thigh was broken, nor you, sir, would have thought it no dream, if you came in for a share of the threshing I gave the fellows with the bed-post. Your health, Captain Grant, and let me tell you, before now, I have called a man out for a less thing than that. We were queer fellows in 'The Tipperary,' passed our jokes, and snapped our fingers afterwards at the best of them, and who dare bring us to an account for what we either did or said."

Here the Major drew breath, filled his glass, with an air of great satisfaction, bowed complacently to the Captain who sat eyeing him with a comical expression of countenance, between a wish to knock him

down or enjoy a hearty laugh at his expense. The latter prevailed as his eye fell on the grave visage of Jennings, the gullible faculties of the lieutenant, he at all times delighted to minister to, and now fooled the Major to the top of his bent, for his special benefit, encouraging him to relate sundry and marvellous anecdotes of his duelling propensities, raising the light, wiry colored locks of the young soldier, in mute amazement at the hair-breadth escapes, and bold daring of the invincible Major.

The ladies had retired for some time, and the captain indulged, unrestrained, in his favorite pastime, quizzing, in turn, both Major and lieutenant, at the same time eliciting shouts of laughter from the rest of the party.

"Well now, Major, the story of your duel with the Norfolk," cried Grant, with a merry twinkle of the eye that bespoke plainly his appreciation of the game in hand, "you were abroad at the time, were you not!"

"No?" returned the Major, with a pompous air.

"It was before 'The Tipperary' went out to the Peninsula, I suppose," interrupted the lieutenant, who took literally each boast the little man had uttered for the last hour, and had already set him down as cutting a distinguished figure amongst the heroes of Vimeira, Cuidad Rodrigo, Badajos, and Salamanca.

"No," returned the Major, slowly, 'The Tipperary,' saw little of the Peninsula campaign."

"But then," persevered the lieutenant, wishing to make him a hero at all hazards, "you took an active part where blows were thickest, and came in, I dare say, for some hard knocks at Quatre Bras and Waterloo." The Major did not give the reply direct to this, but contented himself by remarking with a supercilious air, that "The Tipperary" had seen some hard knocks, in their day, sure enough, and had been well knocked about into the bargain

for beside marching through almost every town in England and Ireland, they had been quartered for over six months at Jersey, and were on the very eve of embarking for the Isle of Wight, when they were countermanded by an order to return home at once, and be disembodied."

The lieutenant in vain adjusted his stock *militaire,* and played with the ends of his crimson sash. Neither would assist him in forming a proper estimate of the man of many marches, who had mounted guard at St. Hellier's, and lest his confused faculties by some sudden revelation, should jump at the truth, the captain reminded the pseudo veteran of his duel with the Norfolk ; and that gentleman filling his glass with an air of affected dignity, remarked—

"That the experience of a senior, was, at all times, profitable to the juniors of a profession, so that he would try and remember the circumstances of the transaction, for the benefit of the officers present." Then emptying his glass, began the ex-

pected narrative—"Well, gentlemen, 'The Tipperary' were, at one time, quartered with the Norfolk; we were lying in the old City of Cashel, at the time, expecting every hour the order for us to go abroad."

"'To Portugal, I suppose,' observed Lieutenant Jennings, who had a particular desire to hear something relative to the Major's *foreign* service.

"'No,' returned the Major, briskly, 'they wanted us in England, at that time; and the Tipperary were too well known to be sent out to fight in Spain and Portugal, while their valuable services were so much more wanting nearer home.'

The Lieutenant was silenced. And the Major continued—

"I may mention it to you, gentlemen; but Sir Maurice knows the truth of what I assert, that the discipline of an Irish regiment, staying in its own county, is always sure to be relaxed. 'The Tipperary' did not differ from others; and our

fellows went out to school their horses, course their greyhounds, hunted, or idled, just pretty much as they pleased. The red-coat gentry, as you will find out yourselves some of those days, are sure to come in, for whatever fun is going on in Ireland; and 'the Tipperary boys,' I promise you, were no way backward. Well, the worst of it was, the English fellows got on better, some way, with the women than we did; to be sure, they all knew us before we mounted the lace and cockade, and the best man amongst us was only Joe Power, or Bob MacGuire, whilst the Norfolk men were sure to be *captain'd* and *major'd* to their hearts' content. The ladies, too, found it difficult to pronounce some of their names; and the poor silly things set them down at once as grandees in their own country, so that we were neither danced with, or listened to, if one of those boobies chanced to be in the room. Well, our young fellows were mighty sore about it—and we signed a round robin to take the Norfolk

men down, or know for what. Outwit your man first, and bully him after, if you want to get inside him with an Irishwoman, and I firmly believe, the receipt holds good in regard to every woman in the world; we tried it, at any rate, to some purpose, and soon brought the ladies to reason. Mandeville, and some other of our chaps, were for insulting them forthwith. Frank tried it one day on the public walk, by whisking the end of a cutting whip that he held under his arm into the eyes of an officer that was walking with a flame of his—then turned to beg his pardon, and trod on his rival's toe, so confoundedly, that the fellow roared for pain. I remember that evening, at the mess, we were all in great spirits, for a meeting was settled for the next morning.

"*Mad Devil,* was a crack shot; but Captain Curzon was the deuce of a quick one, and did'nt much like waiting for his adversary's fire; so before the signal was given his ball whizzed by Frank's ear. This threw Mandeville off his centre, but not

much. He coolly muttered something about "the gentleman taking his time when he was more used to it,"—his ball at the same moment winging the Captain, by shattering his right arm, just below the elbow. I never saw a fellow more provoked with himself than Frank was, for not sending the daylight through him. When he met Curzon a week or two after, philandering Miss Falkener, doing interesting, with his arm in a sling, and in higher favour than ever with the lady, after being wounded in a duel. The whole regiment besides was looked on as heroes by the women, and of course ten times more insolent and obnoxious to us. Well, such a thing could not be let go on, so we bit our lips and were friends from the teeth out, until we could fairly trap them.

"About this time a subscription ball was got up, where the Norfolk men promised themselves an open triumph; well, the day of the ball, as if by accident, we joined a party of them that were strolling about,

and commenced telling one story or another of the Rock of Cashel, that frowned above us at the time, and when their curiosity was well excited, turned up a steep path that led to the old ruin. The Englishmen had seen it over and over again; but still were very curious in examining every niche and archway of the building. And our fellows had told a bushel of lies that were all swallowed down; for there's no story, no matter how absurd, but I do verily believe would be credited of an Irish castle. Well, as we were coming away, a question was raised by one of our party, How, in time of siege, in former days, the fortress was supplied with water, as it contained none within itself?

"'Easy enough,' said I, 'that stone image you see outside there, standing on a pedestal,' pointing to a rude figure cut out of grey granite, 'Saint Patrick gave the power to spout up water whenever the defenders of the blessed rock, that contains

the holy chapel of king Cormac, should want it.'

"'Ah, aye,' said an English fellow, 'a sort of *jet d'eau*, I suppose, supplied with water, from some spring we don't see."

"'Not at all,' said I, 'the saint supplies that image from Lady's Well, at the other side of the valley yonder,' pointing to where the clear fountain that supplies the town, was bubbling nearly a quarter of a mile from where we stood, and some hundred yards below us.

"'Impossible,' exclaimed they all in a breath, 'water so far below the level of the image, could never rise to it unless forced by some engine, whose machinery must be concealed underneath the statue itself.'

"'Examine it, gentlemen,' said I coolly 'and satisfy yourselves that there is no such thing,' and sure enough it underwent a very close scrutiny, and all acquitted the statue of having anything to do with Lady's Well, or any other well whatsoever. They

puzzled and wondered, and wondered and puzzled again, to find out how the stone image could supply the fortress with water.

"'You may smile, gentlemen, when you hear;' said I, 'but I lay fifty pound with any, or every man amongst you, that I prove the truth of what I assert; and that is simply this, when that image hears the bishop's clock at the palace strike twelve at midnight, it descends to Lady's well, and takes a huge draught of water, which I have heard given as a reason for the scarcity of water in this town; and I am led to suppose the water then drank, is retained for a time of siege, when it is sure to be most wanting.'

"Laws! how they stared; but nothing like betting a good round sum to convince men you are in earnest; my bet was booked in no time, by three of them; and it was agreed a guard should be placed on the image, that very night, to test the truth of my story. We all went to the ball, ex-

cept the officers, who took up the bet; they formed an extra guard on the rock that night, and a cold snowy one it happened to be. Well, we laughed among ourselves prodigiously; and were all seated at supper, talking of the bet, when the unfortunate devils made their appearance, with their noses as blue as indigo; and their teeth chattering with the cold, crying out,

"Power's bet is lost."

"The ladies made room for them at the table, expressing no pity for me, but the dear creatures commiserated the frozen youths in the tenderest manner. Mandeville thought he was worse off than ever, when Miss Falkner turned a deaf ear to one of his best speeches; and pushed away from him, to let Curzon sit between them.

"'Well, Mr. Power,' said he, as he took his seat opposite to where I sat, 'your friend, the statue at the rock, has not been so thirsty as usual to-night, or forgot to be punctual in his visit to Lady's Well;

so we'll thank you for a cool hundred and fifty; your bet is fairly booked, and lost.'

"'Not so fast, sir,' said I, slowly. 'Can you prove the palace clock struck twelve?'

"'We have twenty witnesses to prove it,' cried a number of voices, 'aye! and to prove too,' added Curzon, 'that the stone image, when it struck, never stirred an inch, nor would I am sure, had it struck on from this till Doom's-day.'

"'I only wonder how any man in his senses could make such a bet,' cried a half frozen ensign, 'with a positive certainty of losing, staring him in the face.'

"All now laughed at my expense, the whole company regarding me as a Bedlamite, in much need of a keeper.

"'You booked my bet this morning, if I remember aright, Captain,' said I, addressing Curzon, 'Will you have the goodness now to hand it to General Matthew; and he'll be kind enough to read it for the benefit of this respectable company, to

whose judgment I submit, as to whether I have lost my bet, or not.'

The General was handed the pocket-book, and while the attention of every person present was fixed on him, read aloud—

"'Mr. Power of 'the Tipperary' holds fifty pounds with Captain Curzon; the same sum with Mr. Majendie, also with Mr. Woody, all of 'the Norfolk,' that when a certain specified stone statue on the rock, hears the palace clock strike twelve at midnight, it descends to Lady's Well, and swallows a huge draught of water." This set the table in a roar, and for some moments, the General's voice was not heard, announcing, "that the bet had been taken up by P. Curzon, F. Majendie, and J. Woody, Esqrs."

"These three gentlemen, amidst peals of laughter, claimed the bet as lost. I begged them not to decide rashly; for I certainly did not consider it so until they proved to my satisfaction, that the statue, specified by the bet, had actually *heard* the Palace

clock strike twelve; for I only undertook to say it would visit Lady's Well when it *heard* the clock strike twelve, a circumstance I thought would be difficult for even their twenty witnesses to prove; so I would thank those three gentlemen for their fifty each as soon as convenient. This turned the tables completely in my favour; the whole room gave it against them, the ladies present looked on them as mere noodles that "the Tipperary boys" were too sharp for, and nothing lowers a fellow in a woman's opinion equal to seeing him the jest of others—at all events, the rest of the night none of us could be jealous of the Norfolk men, the ladies laughed at them most unmercifully—they had lost their money, and were nearly frost-bitten into the bargain, and had, worse than all, to run the gauntlet of a jest from every man in the room. We had it all our own way that night; but the next morning Mandeville stood at the side of my bed, and tried to make me understand, (for I

was quite done up from all I laughed and drank the night before,) that three invitations lay on the table from the gentlemen, who had lost their bet, to meet them on the sod in half-an-hour. Frank, who had expected, and hoped as much, was stirring early, and now threw a jug of cold water on my head to make me understand the pros and cons of the business.

"I started up, and dressed in double quick, while Frank went into the next room to settle the preliminaries with the seconds; this was soon over, and we were on the ground in no time. A dozen of our own fellows accompanied us, and more than half the Norfolk surrounded Mr. Majendie, who it was arranged should take my first shot; Curzon had modestly declined precedence on the occasion, kindly waving his rank, in consideration of his wounded arm, he relinquishing the honour of making a target of my precious body, to Messieurs Majendie and Woody, both famous hands at taking down a flying swallow with a bullet

So with but little chance of escape I took my ground, and heard Frank Mandeville determine the distance.

"'Muzzle to muzzle, gentlemen,' cried he, in high glee, 'the nimble finger is sure to have it—I hope your friend has good nerves,' addressing Majendie's second, and glancing at the poor devil himself, who stood in a kind of fit between a palsy and an ague, from the perishing and badgering he got the night before, and now with his teeth chattering, and a nipping easterly wind blowing straight in his face, seemed hardly able to hold a pistol in his hand, let alone have nerve to fire it close to a man, who held his at his breast, and moreover looked so utterly unconcerned at the whole affair as I did.

"'I could never agree to it, sir,' said the second, 'it would be down right murder; besides Mr. Majendie is a nervous man.'

"'Well,' said Frank, carelessly, 'perhaps Mr. Woody is not; he can try his

hand first, and your friend can whistle back his pluck in the meantime—No offence to the gentleman—You know the old saying —‘ a looker on sees more of the game than the man that plays, and the best hurler stands on the ditch.’ ”

“ ‘I know nothing of old sayings, sir,’ cried the second, impatiently ; ‘ but this I do know, that the boldest man amongst us would feel nervous in such a position as you propose to place my friend in.’

“ ‘Speak for yourself, and your brother officers, sir,’ said Frank, in a high tone ; ‘ but don’t take on you to judge a Tipperary man—why, the very cockles of his heart rises at the click of one of these sparklers ;’ glancing at his favorite tools that lay near him, reposing in their velvet case, exposed to public view; ‘ not to say the comfort of handling the old true boys, that never hung fire, or missed their mark, since Humpy Carney hanselled them by sending the daylight through Bob Domvil, the fire-eater. Reckon the notches on their

handles, sir, and you'll find they haven't been idle since; and, please the fates, with my consent, shan't be, for some time to come.'

This allusion to the clear score of notches, that stood as plain as A B C for an equal number of pleasant murders, determined at once the Norfolk man.

"'It can't be, sir,' he repeated. 'Your friend must consent to twelve paces at the least.'

'My friend will consent to no such thing—nor neither will I,' returned Frank; 'the law of honor allows us choice of distance and weapon; and, I tell you, sir, we insist fighting muzzle to muzzle; and do you mark me, sir, with pistols loaded with ball too; however contrary it may be to the practice of your regiment, these are the terms ours fight on, and your friend must withdraw his challenge and make an ample apology for sending it, or accede to them, without a murmur. If not, he must take the consequences."

"The second withdrew a few paces from Frank, and whispered with his own party, for a moment; he then returned to enquire what signal should be used, if he allowed his friend to fight on such terms.

" 'The usual signal given on these occasions, to be sure,' replied Frank, with a devil may care sort of expression in his eye, at the unfortunate second. 'Both gentlemen hold a handkerchief at opposite corners, with their left hand, and present the pistol in their right, at the breast of their adversary; the signal is to let fall the corner held by themselves and fire at the same time; practice makes master, and Power is pretty quick at the work, for he drops it like a hot potato, and is sure to go right bang at the same time. But I think you want to freeze his hand this morning, keeping us dallying in this way. Place your friend, sir, the thing will be over in a minute; besides it's not fair to keep the other two gentlemen waiting, though, to be sure, if a man was going to be hanged, he must wait for his

turn; and I see nothing against the same rule holding good for a man's heels being tripped up with a bullet. So Mr. Majendie comes first, and let us make a beginning at any rate.'

"That gentleman's looks no way authorised his friend to give him the lead on this occasion; so whether Frank's pantomimic representation of a muzzle to muzzle duel, was not exactly to their taste, or the morning was unpropitious, the affair ended with my pocketing the money, and an apology into the bargain. The Norfolk were right glad to cut their stick when the rout came —indeed, I heard, they applied for it privately. Sally Falkner, like a girl of spirit, gave the go-bye to Curzon, and married Frank Mandeville; and I," continued the Major, in conclusion, with an air of modesty that was very amusing, "might (now that it's past and gone, I may tell it) have the pick and choice of the finest woman amongst them, and right glad for the asking; but

'old birds are not to be caught with chaff' —there was no tin flying, and Joe Power was n't the lad, in those days, to encumber himself with heavy baggage, without knowing for what."

A SQUIREEN AT HOME.

CHAPTER XVI.

By the time the Major had concluded this reminiscence of his early campaign, the evening was falling fast, and Sir Maurice reminded the party that though the ladies had promised to wait coffee for them, still it was not gallant in them to try their patience so long. This hint set them all in motion towards the castle ; and after consigning those gentlemen to the female portion of the party, we shall take the liberty of introducing our readers to another of a different character, in its neighbour-

hood. These were two young men, apparently of the same age, and rank in life, seated at a large bay window in a half furnished apartment, whose rich cornices, and curiously carved bouffets, the gilding effaced by time and damp, their faded beauties looking somewhat respectable, evidently the 'light of other days,' but now, like ancient gentlewomen, reduced, still dignified, they looked down, in solemn mockery, on the soiled boards, patched and broken in various places, uncarpeted, and uncared for, whilst the dilapidated window, bespeaking symptoms of not slow but rapid decay, was in perfect keeping with all around ; still its fractured panes exhibited some skill and attention in the *artiste,* who had laudably endeavoured to restore their shattered relics, to, at least, one of the pristine purposes, intended by the inventor of glass—the material used at Kilgroggy possessed another advantage besides excluding air, which entitles it to the special patronage of all proprietors of cobwebbed and

neglected apartments, admitting Heaven's light but faintly ; the dim obscure of the brown or blue paper patch, good-naturedly shading, from curious eyes, things better not seen by the searching glare of day ; and in this age of expediency, and we may add luxury, when the advertising columns of every newspaper we take up, announces some new invention to suit the wants and wishes of mankind, we may be forgiven for alluding to this truly Irish mode of glazing a window; and, lest the custom should fall into disuetude, we mention it for the sole benefit of slovenly housekeepers, who, by reviving the usage, may not only defy external vapour, but effectually baffle the 'detective force' in discovering any discrepancy or inaccuracy in the arrangement *domestique*. On the present occasion, light and air were both freely admitted into the room, we have attempted to describe, by the sash being thrown up midway. One of the young men occupied the window, lying rather than sitting, his legs thrown in

a careless attitude on its seat, his elbow resting on its framework, while, from time to time, he sipped, from a glass, some punch he had left on the window sill to cool, at intervals smoking lazily and listlessly from a blackened pipe, which seemed to afford him much enjoyment; though its soothing puffs were lost on his companion, who regarded the apathy of the smoker with anything rather than a look of approval, or admiration : but gave way to his own impatient feelings, by bestowing a hearty kick on the greyhound, who, that moment, stirred beneath the table he sat at; then swilling off, hastily, a second tumbler of hot punch, exclaimed, in a voice of irritation,

"Well, Nick, I'd give anything for your indifference about people—hang me, but I would give the last shilling I have in the world to care as little for your sister Lucy as you do ; to see you smoking there as happy as a king, and she flirting away with that fat Captain—that for all the world is like a

butt of beer, with a face raddled on it, and two bung holes for eyes, and it set rolling about, to be laughed and kicked at by whoever liked."

"I'd rather be at the tapping than the kicking of it," returned Nick, withdrawing for a moment, the pipe from his mouth, and squirting into the weed-covered semicircle of gravel, that lay before the house. "Nothing better than a good drink of beer," continued he, regardless of his friend's evident chagrin, "and in this hot weather, I think its far before that scalding punch, but there's no doing the brewery out of it this time; Frank, my bill there is as long as my mother's pedigree was, when she was down in Galway, in hot pursuit of a thirty-first cousin of the O'Connor Don', and wanted to pass Jenny on him as a thorough-bred Milesian, and no mistake."

"But, he wouldn't bite," said Frank.

"No," returned his companion, "he was too knowing a cove, though Jenny and the mother played him like a trout, and proved,

beyond all reasonable doubt, their near relationship to Fin Mac Coul; but all wouldn't do, there's no getting round a Connaught man, by boasting of a long pedigree; he's always sure to have the best of that argument; and this chap talked of Fin, as a mere upstart, in comparison with his ancestors, that were born gentlemen before the flood; and every man of them, worth their weight in gold, as he hoped would be the case, with himself one day or another, when a bill was brought into Parliament, for the reclaiming of waste lands, as most of his property came under that denomination."

"Well, I suppose it ended as Lucy's flirting with that Grant will some of those days—he cut and run."

"To be sure, he did," returned Nick, "I told them, from the first, it was a wild goose chase. The fellow was a dead shot, so there was no bullying him, and as to nabbing one of his sort with talk about your ancestors, and he looking for a girl

with the *shiners* all the time. It was all my eye; but women will be wilful; they saw their folly out, and Jenny saw her Connemera lover, pedigree, waste lands and all, spliced to a tanner's daughter with twenty thousand down on the nail. Of course, he married for spite, as Jenny vowed she had refused him; and as the game was up, lost no time in cocking her cap at another."

This little piece of family history, so descriptive of the failure of Jane O'Brady's matrimonial speculation, restored, in some degree, the good-humour of Mr. Frank Mandeville, who, mixing a third tumbler, evinced symptoms of being more communicative than in the earlier part of the interview.

"Well, Nick, if you saw what I did, to-day, down at the hermitage, you'd say she was trying her hand at another chap, and he but a raw one, into the bargain; but I didn't look much at her," continued he, with something approaching to a sigh.

"To tell the truth, I was too much taken up watching her sister Lucy making a fool of herself with that buffoon of a Grant, laughing as if her heart would break at every word he said; and that laugh of Lucy's, you know, that comes straight from her heart, that, if she was after killing me I would forgive her. While I was looking at her beautiful teeth, and her lips, Nick, that were as red and as fresh-looking, to-day, as the cherries she was eating—"

Here Nick's impatient "pish" at once proclaimed him brother to the lady, as well as the increased energy with which he got up the steam, puffing away vehemently at this lover-like burst of his friend, and he, evidently much relieved from unburthening his vexation, continued in a tone, half descriptive, half complaining the sequel of what he had witnessed that morning—

"I saw the whole party, Nick, crossing the wooden bridge on the way down to the

Hermitage; I was playing a salmon at the very minute just near the Weir, a good way from where they were then; but I knew Lucy at a glance, and the fat beast beside her, and guessed how the land lay; that they were on some party of pleasure that neither you nor I were to know anything about—Well, in my surprise, I gave the salmon a chuck that snapped the line in two, and who should come up to me at that instant but your boy, 'Nickey the Nurse.' 'Oh, Masther Frank,' says he, 'a sight ov company intirely is comin' down to the Hermitage. The officers, an' the young ladies, an' I drove the misthress over this mornin', they'll have great divarshun bine by, an' I'm sure they'll be mighty glad to see you, sir, if you come over, an' I'll carry the tackle fur ye!' 'It's manners to wait to be asked, Nickey,' says I, 'but I'll go over at any rate, and see what they're about.' So we made a short cut, and were there long before them, and sure enough, before the old building, just

under the yew tree, a table was laid out in the greatest style—'twould make a man after his dinner hungry to look at it, and you may think how my teeth watered, that hadn't tasted a bit since breakfast this morning, before seven o'clock. When Nickey found I wouldn't appear to them, he took some of the best things off the table, and settled me very comfortably in the old building, where I had a spy-hole out through the ivy, without being seen at all myself; and there I set towork and had my pick and choice of the dinner without leave or license, and heard them all below chattering and talking like a flock of magpies; your uncle, the Major, the biggest man among them, putting in his prate about everything. Well, if it wasn't for the way Lucy got on, grinning and laughing at every word that fat fool said, I'd have enjoyed looking at the rest, more than the best play I ever was at. Your mother was *palavering* Sir Maurice, who looked mighty high I thought. Your sister Jane, was hanging on the arm of

that white-haired, raw-boned boy, as if she were dying for love of him, crying out, 'Ah! do look at those lovely mountains, with their lights and shadows; while he, I promise you, threw a much more longing look at the dinner-table."

"And had no objection to *lighten* its substantials. I should think," remarked Nick, laying down his pipe, and laughing immoderately at his own pun, and the picture his fancy drew of the hungry lieutenant, obliged to swallow his sister's mawkish sentimentality, instead of his dinner.

Frank joined heartily in his friend's mirth, and continued his description of the party.

"The best scene among them was Kitty, or, I beg her pardon, Miss Kate, with an accordion in her hand, that she picked up, I suppose, somewhere on her way, or may be came ready primed and loaded with, to slay the unwary; this she kept drawing backwards and forwards, playing something like a psalm tune, or the Dead March

in Saul, into the ears of that unfortunate pale, quiet-looking young man, who seemed every moment on the eve of running away from her, but she stood in an attitude before him, with her large gooseberry eyes fixed like a basilisk on his face, so that the poor wretch hadn't the power to move, but looked for all the world like 'patience on a monument smiling at grief,' while she, with her face half a yard longer than usual kept playing away, driving the man nearly mad, until the Colonel interfered in his favor, and got him a reprieve from Miss Kate's music, by asking the young lady to allow the poor woe begone creature to eat his dinner; then to be sure, when they were seated, to hear all the lies the Major told of the time he was in 'the Tipperary.' Everything wild or funny my poor father did, he told as if it happened to himself; and to hear him talk, you'd think he was the finest fellow that ever stood in shoe leather."

"And there's not a greater coward in

Munster between you and I," remarked his hopeful nephew.

"I wish you could have heard him an hour ago," returned Frank.

"It strikes me," said Nick O'Brady, who loved mischief for its own sake, "that it would be capital fun to waylay the Major on his way home; they won't leave Lisfinn until it is dusk, for Nickey was ordered to bring back the car here, as they all intended to cross in the boat; so we might come up with him, without his ever know ing who it was, and give him another story to tell."

"I'd enjoy seeing such a confounded coward blown up before the very party he boasted so too, and give the old chap a good fright into the bargain, for all the lies he told to-day."

"I'd like to duck him," added Frank, who felt very sore at the Major's appropriating to himself the well-known exploits of his sire in 'the Tipperary.'

"We'll frighten him well, at all events,"

resumed his companion; "and now let us go out to the stable, and see Nickey, and he'll be able to tell us, what hour they're likely to break cover at Lisfinn."

The young men accordingly strolled out in the direction of the stable-yard, followed by the greyhound that lay under the table, and joined, before they reached their destination, by a spaniel, two noble pointers, and a black setter, that always kept close guard on his master's footsteps—whatever scarcity was about Kilgroggy, it could not be said to be that of the dog species. Each of the canine tribe found a representative there, and besides a regular pack of harriers, the proprietor of the establishment could boast of a miscellaneous collection of the dog *genus*, that would supply a Norwegian Market for nearly a twelvemonth. Somebody we once heard, shrewdly enough, observe, that the *decline* and *fall* of an Irish family, was most surely indicated whenever the dog species about the *locale* outnumbered considerably the pigs

and cows of the farm-yard. Around Kilgroggy, they enjoyed an undisputed majority, for no other animal made their appearance, nor do we believe it contained any, save a badger, fastened up in an outhouse, and some young foxes—especial favourites with Misther Nick—nursed and petted to be hunted and killed by the next winter, whilst the stud that was to come in for a share of the sport, scampered at large through the badly kept paddocks around. The grooms, themselves, (if two bare-legged, and bare-headed *garsoons*, able to wisp down a horse with the best man at the curragh, deserved that epithet) seemed to enjoy the general sort of holiday, that reigned in and about the establishment ; they now played pitch and toss, on a piece of gravel that originally constituted part of a drive leading from the hall door of the mansion to the large wooden gate that formerly shut out the back-yard and its unsightly offices from the public gaze ; but which now, paralysed at one side, had fallen

from its high estate, and bit the dust, while its standing member looked more like a mendicant seeking for alms, than a sturdy sentinel, to prevent access to, or oppose egress from, the back settlements it originally protected. The gravel drive itself had changed much from its former appearance, and presented now, a striking resemblance to some verdure gardens we have seen, chequered alternately with lively green and sterile space; the only difference unassisted nature had done its work for the gravel, while the bad or good taste (if you will) of the florist, intersected the verdant luxuriance of the grass plot with zig-zag and fantastic heaps of clay too often, to preserve their form unimpaired, with aught save scanty shrub or flower.

Nick O'Brady and his companion stopped a few moments, *en passant*, to witness the edifying play of his varlets, and after bestowing a few scientific remarks on the game, led the way to the stable yard.

Nickey Murphy, or as he was more generally known, *Nickey the Nurse* the latter appel-

lation having been bestowed on him at an early age, to distinguish him from his young master, whose foster-brother he was, now stood leaning against the manger, divested of his livery coat, which hung jauntily on the stable door; eyed by Nickey, with a very malevolent expression of countenance, as he stood smoking away, with an air of utter indifference to the comfort of the poor horse he had just driven, standing beside him with its harness still unremoved, but making up for any privation he might have endured that morning, by now exercising with all diligence, his masticatory powers, on the provender that lay before him. As the two young gentlemen entered the stable yard Nickey withdrew the pipe from his mouth, but without moving his eyes off the dark green jacket and shining buttons that had hitherto engaged his attention, commenced a conversation, half soliloquy, half expostulatory; and certainly no way complimentary to his serving garment.

"Wisha, sweet bad luck to you fur a coat,

that's like the mate the divil tempted the pedlar with, naither fish, flesh, nor fowl, but mate fur all that; like yeersilf, naither wan thing nor th' other; not a Bang up nor a riding coat, nor a sarvent's frock, but a *scutty wattij* that skivers my arms all day as if I war a turkey skewered for biling, or a dog in body clothes, looking like some outlandish highlandher, not as if myself was in it, at all, at all. Wisha, what made me put you on; 'tis little the young ladies knew the figure I'd cut, or the scrooge I'd be in all day, when they kept such a bother 'bout my lookin' ginteel, attindin afore the officers, or little they'd care aythur," added Nickey whose wrath seemed to rise at the remembrance of his sufferings, "the quality, *mavrone,* think ov nothin bud their own fun and divarshun. Whoever dances, the poor sarvints are sure to paythe piper. Morphy here and Morphy there,' I'm always *Morphy* afore the company," here Nickey chuckled, "and, why didn't you do that, Morphy?" here he affected the company voices of his young

mistresses, "while their poor sarvint boy," continued he, resuming his natural key, "was suffering the pains of purgatory all the time, wid that *wizzen* ov a coat that's not big enough for wan ov the *garsoons*, let alone to say a man like mysilf."

His master, with his companion, now entered the stable, and the current of Nickey's thoughts, no way disturbed by this accession to his listeners, addressed them on the subject nearest his own heart; first pointing to the objectionable raiment which looked provokingly unconscious, as it hung on the open door, then shrugging his shoulders with much energy, to give practical proof of being no longer confined within its scanty limits; regarding it at the same time, with a look of profound contempt.

"Oh thin, misther Nick, 'tis myself is proud to be rid ov that crab shell; bad cess to me, bud I'd sooner walk to Cork, than attind another day in it, an' only

I didn't wish to harum the young ladies and their bachelors to the fore, when I stood attindin um at dinner, I'd have dhrawn my two shouldhers together in the frunt, an' sent the back flyin in smithereens before um."

Here the two young gentlemen laughed heartily, and expressed their regret at Nickey's non-performance of this feat."

Beganays," resumed Nickey, "it's aisy fur ye to laugh when ye war'nt crampt up in that haythin ov a coat, that was never intended fur a christian man at all, at all; sure I have it frum the young ladies own lips, that when the misthress an they were up in Limerick, they kept a tiger or some wild baist ov the kind, dhressed up in that livery, and the misthress herself tould me that whin ye'er honour stopt paying the the jointher, she could'nt afford to feed him or pay him. These wor her own words, an' little blame to her fur the feeding part ov it, for sure 'twould take a good forthune to fill the maw ov a wolf at self, not to say

a tiger. But *beganays,* as to the paying, 'twould never lighten the pocket ov anny body, for who'd give anny thing to a wild baist ov the kind, but piper's wages, more, kicks than ha'pence." "Sorra blame to her fur keepin him, if it was her figary, bud 'twas a sin and a shame to turn sich a wild brute loose on the country, and ax a dacent boy like myself to wear his cast offs—moreover, whin they fit me like a sthrate waistcoat, an *bedad* like that same is enough to drive a man out ov his seven sinses entirely, entirely, to think ov it."

"Well Nickey," said his master, gravely, "sure if the coat pinched at self, you had the comfort to think that you were all in the fashion, and that it was worn by your betters before now."

"My betters, Misther Nick," retorted Nickey indignantly, "do you call a tiger or anny baist ov the sort, the betters ov an honest boy, that man or child nobody had ever to say black was the white of his eye,

to yet; if ye do, sir, ye'er greatly mistaken, beggin ye'er pard'n, fur I would'nt compare myself wan day wid anny baist, not to say a wild cat ov the sort. For what's a tiger afther all, sir, bud an overgrown cat, left to nathure widout any edicashun—let to run wild in the woods in those foreign parts, where, I suppose, the misthress had him caught and snaffled like a young horse, before she put the livery on him; an' *mavrone*, it's no wondher fur the people to turn out bad in those times, or turn aginst their own masthers and misthresses, when they look upon the wild baists as their betters, an' put um in the place ov their own born sarvints; but the world is turn'd upside down, an' no blame to it, whin a young gintleman ov family an forthin that ought to know the difference, reflects on his own fosther brother, an' thinks more ov a tiger in a livery jacket than he does ov his own flesh and blood I may say, that was raired on the wan milk, wid himself before now."

Here Nickey the Nurse folded his arms in mute despair, and looked with profound melancholy and reproach at his master, though that gentleman could not refrain laughing at the rueful expression of his serving man's countenance; still his claim of fosterer saved him, for the present, from carrying the joke any further. A piece of self-denial Mr. Nick O'Brady seldom practised, preferring, on most occasions, his jest to his friend; but now, contrary to his wont, perhaps from some early association, called up from memory's cells, by the touching appeal of Nickey, he relieved the evident distress of his humble companion in the sports of boyhood and maturer years, by saying—

"Never mind, Nickey, I was only taking a *rise* out of you. I wouldn't swap you for the best tiger that ever stood on four legs, or two. Money couldn't purchase you from me; and I'll say this much for you, Nickey, I don't think money's worth would

tempt you to sell me to any man that ever breathed."

"Thank'ee Misther Nick," said the poor faithful creature, his good natured countenance brightening up at being thought so far above all price, "an' sure, sir, afther all, it's only justice fur ye to say so, fur the last dhrop in my body is at ye'er service; and why not, or to a dog belongin' to man, woman, or child ov ye'er seed, breed, or generation."

"Well Nickey, your master knows that," said Frank Mandeville, "but he thought it too bad for you to complain of your livery, after looking at all those dashing officers eat their dinner with such an appetite to day." This was thrown out as a *feeler* to draw Nickey out on the subject that engaged his own attention most, and was what sportsmen would call *beating the Bush.*

Nickey, with a tact and delicacy, almost peculiar to the lower order of Irish, started the *game*, without at all shocking the young

lover's sensibility ; besides the fosterer was a privileged person. He had been almost the constant companion of both young men, from his childhood, and without ever presuming on the intimacy formed in those early days, he still retained sufficient influence over each, to share their confidence, and if not actually made the depository of their respective secrets, at least to understand them sufficiently to warrant an allusion to the lover's feelings, not unseemly at the present moment.

"Oh, *bedad*, I saw that same Misther Frank, if it did me anny good, bud it's not the likes ov some ov um that I'd like to see sayted near a sartin young lady, nor what she'll like herself some ov those days, when she gets over the figary and grandher ov the thing; but it's a tight, handsome, young fella, wid a pleasant look, and word for every wan he meets ; not that Captain *Soog-gawn* that nobody knows where he come frum, and looks for all the world like a bundle of sthraw, wid a coat and a hat put

on it to frighten away the crows. He'd do fur that same, bud he wouldn't be able to jump a ridge ov praytees if a pack of the best hounds that ever broke cover or crossed a country, was at his back like some wan I know."

"You're pretty right," returned Frank, much pleased at Nickey's description of his rival, "but Master Nick and I want to know what hour they're likely to leave Lisfinn—we'd like to give those gentlemen a bit of a fright, and teach the old Major not to tell in future, of himself, what was done by a man he couldn't hold the candle for, and that was my own poor father, when he was in the "Tipperary."

"No, nor a farthin rushlight," returned Nickey, who like most of his countrymen, delighted in *superlativising* a metaphor, "sure I remember his honour well, and a fine, portly man he was, as you'd see in a day's walk. *Mad Divil*, as the people used to call him, for sure the fun was in him to the last. Ould Biddy Cantwell, my owu mother's sisther, was the nurse tendher

that was in it, whin he departed (God rest his sowl, tho' he wasn't wan ov my own way ov thinking,) an hilped to lay him out, afther I ha'd it from her own lips. You wor at the boordin' school, sir, the same time, an' a man and horse was sent off fur you in the dead hour ov the night; for the docthers said, he wouldn't last any time, an' he kept callin for ye, frum dusk the night before. Well, Biddy was sitting up wid him, an' he used to say to her every minnit—

"'Whin'ill Masther Frank be here. I must wait to see him," he'd cry, as if he had partiklar business wid ye, "an' much as they wish to see me in th'other world, an great as their hurry is, they must have patience untle he comes.'

"'Well, he kept up this tchune all night, an' the next day; an' to'ards evenin' sure enough, you rode into the back yard, wid the foam an inch thick on the mare. An' whin he hears the sound ov ye'er horse's feet, he rises himself up in the bed, as

sthrong as if he had twenty years to live, an calls out to Biddy—

"'Bad luck to you, Biddy Cantwell, don't ye hear Masther Frank. Open the doore fur him in a hurry, and if I don't see him, Biddy, be sure you tell him from me that he'll live and die a keen sportsman, for he's in at the *death*.'

"Before Biddy could run to the door, ye wor in the room ye'rself, sir."

"And before either of us could reach the bed," added Frank, in a melancholy tone, "it was all over with the poor governor."

"He died as he lived," remarked Nick O'Brady, "true *game* to the last, and didn't deserve such an old *codger* as the Major should crow over him when he was gone."

"*Bedad*, that's thrue enough, Masther Nick," returned the fosterer, removing the harness off the horse, and commencing busily to wisp him down; "but wan good turn desarves another, an' sure I'll get

some ov the boys to pin the Major this evening; for the misthress an' the young ladies, I'll be bound, won't lave the castle untle it's purty late; an'give him a squeeze, fur there's not many among um that does'nt owe him a grudge for wan thing or another that he did to themselves before now."

It was then arranged that the two young gentlemen should prepare themselves as if for rabbit shooting, and when returning from the meadows near the river, accidentally, on purpose, join the party, from Lisfinn, in their way to the boat; contrive to separate the Major from the officers; "the boys" at that moment to pounce on him, and without materially injuring the gentleman's person, frighten him into good behaviour for the future, and expose his braggadocia vauntings within hearing of the very men he had boasted so extravagantly to but a few hours before; besides thus punishing the plagiarist of his father, Frank solaced himself with thinking, that in the general confusion he would be able himself to effect

a movement on the fat captain's ribs, whilst Nick O'Brady, with the glee of a school-boy, looked forward to knocking up, what he called, a *scrimmage* amongst the whole party.

CHAPTER XVII.

A NIGHT ATTACK.

THE evening set in quickly, as the two friends started on their projected *sortie;* they had gained the meadows through which the party would pass, and keeping their eye on the gravel drive, that wound its way in the direction of the boat, reconnoitred a neighbouring grove, in which lay, *perdu,* Nickey and his friends; then, discharging their pieces, sauntered about, until the sound of voices, at a distance, rendered distinct by the stillness of the night, announced that the party were in

motion. In a few minutes Frank had the mortification of hearing Lucy's laugh, borne on the breeze, joined in chorus with that of his hated rival.

"Well, now, Nick, isn't this too bad," said the unfortunate lover, in a tone between vexation and reproach, "to hear her laughing in this way, at half a mile off, with a man that she knows only for a few weeks—"

"And you," said Nick, finishing the sentence for his friend, "that have known her for as many years ready to throw her in the river, for laughing *at* a man that you didn't care was at the bottom of it this very minute."

"No, it's not for that I'm angry with her, nor would I care so much about her laughing with the greatest stranger; but you saw it yourself, as well as I did, that since that odious detachment came into the neighbourhood, she never gave me a fair look, but, on the contrary, turned up her nose at every word I said, while that bungy

captain, if he only cried, *fiddle-stick*, she'd burst her sides laughing."

"Don't take it to heart, old fellow!" returned his companion. "Lucy and you shall be married yet, and if she broke faith with the man she promised when she was but a little girl, and that man my friend to boot, as sure as we stand in this field, I'd shoot, with my own hand, her husband at the altar, and disown her for a sister from that day to the day of my death; but there's no fear of her thinking of Grant; only you're in love with her, man—you'd never think of such a thing—a girl laughing *with* a man, or *at* a man, is no sign of her caring for him, and Lucy is a right good girl, and worth the Royal George full of the other two. So never fear, when your old uncle slips his cable, some fine day, but she'll think as much of you as she did before she ever left Kilgroggy; and when once in harness, like myself and all other *harum scarums*, she'll draw, as kindly as if the snaffle was on all her life."

Thus comforted, our friend Frank awaited the party; but not without sundry misgivings in his own mind, that the flirtation of his "lady love," with the gallant Captain would end in his own dismissal; and as the green-eyed monster fastened on his heart, he determined to profit by the present opportunity, and pay off that gentleman for any damage he might have perpetrated on the lady's affections by making him corporeally feel the enormity of his conduct, in the weight of a rival's arm, bestowing what he considered well-merited chastisement for such presumption. The indulgence of any base passion lowers the individual; but one we blush to acknowledge, even to ourselves, is sure to lead to meanness and injustice; Frank Mandeville was naturally brave and honorable, and ere his jealousy was awakened, would have disdained the idea of taking advantage of any man in an unguarded moment; but the very consciousness now, that he indulged a feeling he was ashamed to avow, led him to re-

venge himself, secretly, on the object of his jealous fears; flinging to the winds the better feelings of his nature, and give himself up unreservedly to the indulgence of a vengeful and ungenerous passion. When the pseudo sportsmen came up with the party they had so long waited for, the night had set in, and they found some difficulty in singling out the Major; not from the increasing dusk, but that gentleman, with an eye to his own safety, had placed himself rather centrally; his daughter and two nieces, with their attendant beaux, formed the advanced guard; his flank consisted of Mrs. O'Brady, and sergeant Wetherell, who had been sent for by his master, at an early hour, in order to strengthen the escort; whilst Captain Grant, Lucy, and Mr. Foster formed his *point d'appui*, laughing and talking quite loud enough to tell the enemy that, whoever was napping, the *corps de reserve* were not sleeping on their post; the *picquet* of the party were safely landed in the boat; Nick

O'Brady had dutifully taken his mother's hand, to assist her in; but whether a sudden faintness had come over him, or the lady required more assistance than one gentleman was able to bestow, her son found himself unequal to transport the maternal burden from the bank to the boat, and called to Mr. Foster to lend a hand; both gentlemen were in the act of depositing the lady in safety, when a shout and momentary scuffle on the bank, attracted their attention; the next moment, Frank Mandeville, with his arm round Lucy O'Brady's waist, carrying, rather than supporting her, came plump into the midst of the party, on the water, and nearly upset the boat; a strong muscular arm (it was Nick O'Brady's,) righted her, and seizing an oar, calling out to Frank, to do the same, and row for his life. A few strokes sent the boat flying across the river, leaving the Major, his own man, and Captain Grant in the hands of the enemy; their shouts had no other effect, on the rowers, than to increase, if possible

their speed, nor did they pause from their labours until they reached nearly the centre of the river; too far to afford them any assistance, yet near enough to discern, by the dim light, the party that were left behind. Colonel Saville and the other gentlemen in the boat, now urged, vehemently, those who had taken possession of the oars to row them back in order to rescue, their brother officer and the Major, out of the hands of seemingly desperate men, who might be, for all they knew to the contrary, the most sanguinary murderers.

"Keep yourselves quiet gentlemen," said Nick O'Brady, coolly, "that's not the way murder is committed in Ireland; besides, if they were about anything of that kind, 'twould be all over with them before we'd be half way back, so we'll just stay where we are, and listen to what the fellows are about, I see they have the Major on his knees."

"Oh, I hope," cried Mrs. O'Brady, shut-

ting her eyes closely, to prevent her being hereafter called as evidence to what she actually *saw*, "that they're not going to shoot your poor uncle; do Nick, like a dear good creature, as you are, row us to the Drumgar side, before anything occurs."

"Oh no, cousin Nick," cried Agnes, in a voice of terror, starting from her seat, "would you leave papa, to be murdered with in a few yards of us, and we near enough to save him. Oh dear, dear Nick, do not desert him at this dreadful moment." And exhausted with her own fears, she sunk back in an extremity of agony.

"Impossible," cried Colonel Saville, in a determined voice; "we must return at once, Mr. O'Brady, and rescue those gentlemen; "then grasping the oar the other held, was about practically to carry out his intentions, while Nick, perceiving his design, clutched it with all his might, exclaiming in a cool, half-jesting tone, still firmly holding the oar,

"I know what I'm about—we'd do more harm than good, if we attempted such folly, as to go near them now."

"You cannot prevent me, sir," said Colonel Saville haughtily, "from attempting to save my brother officer, and the two helpless men with him, from such fearful odds."

"None of us three can swim well, Colonel," said Lindsay; "but never fear, we'll follow you to the last." Then flinging off their neck gear, preparatory to a plunge. Nick O'Brady called out,

"The boat must inevitably upset."

And his mother and sisters, acting on the hint, by a simultaneous movement, pulled the four officers down to their respective places. Mrs. O'Brady held the Colonel firmly, in her by no means feminine grasp, and her daughters, acting on their mama's Amazonian example, secured his three comrades from attempting anything like a cold bath; the uproar in the boat now became deafening; both mother and daughters alter-

nately screamed, and scolded their captives into quiet submission, while Agnes lay more dead than alive, in silent shame and horror, at the whole proceeding; her aunt vociferously besought her son to land them at the opposite bank from her friend the Major; and her intended son-in-law, having a very decided objection to rescue those gentlemen in person, while the Colonel seeing all resistance vain in opposing the lady's muscular and oratorical powers, quietly capitulated, glad on any terms to secure his freedom from her gentle embrace, having literally hugged him nearly to suffocation.

"Will ye hold your clatter," cried Nick, addressing his mother and sisters in a tone of voice, sounding clearly distinct above the general uproar. "Let us hear and see what those fellows are doing; while ye women keep jabbering there like a flock of wild ducks, we can't know what's going on; tell us how frightened you were, when it's all over, but hold your tongues for the

present, and we'll say ye were fainting all the time."

Then shifting the boat, so as to command a view of the party, on the bank, he assured the officers that there was no cause for any alarm ; for that no attack, conducted as that had been, was ever attended with serious consequences ; the coolness of both his, and his friend's manner, who must necessarily know the country and people well, served as a kind of guarantee to those gentlemen, for their brother officer's safety ; besides, they had no alternative but to submit in silence, guarded as they were, by the four ladies, ready to pounce on them if they offered to make the least movement, or evinced the slightest inclination to escape from the boat ; they had nothing for it, but to sit still, and watch their friends at a tantalizing distance, and wish their fair guards anywhere but beside them ; who, deaf to all arguments but their own safety, now that that was in some degree secured, kept comparatively

quiet. The voices from the bank came distinctly across the water, heard in the stillness of a summer night, while the pale moon that had just risen as if to shame deeds of darkness, threw a faint, shadowy light on the figures crowded close to the water; a ring seemed to have been formed of some twenty or thirty men, broken on the outer edge, next the river; so that the party in the boat commanded a full view of the centre of the circle, where knelt the valiant Major, who seemed to have undergone a severe cross-examination, and now with his hands clasped imploringly together, besought, in the most piteous accents, mercy from seemingly the leader of the party.

"The marcy you desarve," said this personage, facing his fallen foe, and his voice expressing bitter irony and half-suppressed passion, "the marcy you'll give some of those days the tenants of Knockanure; dhrive um from house and home, and bekase the last life in the laise dhropt, set

the lands over their heads to the highest bidder, get the sheriff an the sogers to level their cabins, before their eyes, that their fathers, an' their granfathers lived in. What marcy would ye give him, boys?" cried he, addressing those around, "for doin' this good-natured turn, to the poor honest men that never as much as put a piece ov mate in the pot, barrin' ov a Christmas day, sthrivin' to pay him the hard rint; what marcy does he desarve?" repeated he.

"The marcy he shewed Keerivan, the outlaw," cried a voice from the crowd, "promised him protection first, an' hung him afther."

"We'll not give him that same," cried another, he desarves the hanging widout the protiction. An' *faixs*," added the speaker, in a facetious tone, "he knows himself, we never promised him the like."

Here the Major groaned audibly and essaying to speak, vainly endeavoured to

be heard amidst the different modes of death decreed him by the assembly.

"Dhrown him like a puppy dog," cried one.

"Hang him up widout benefit of clargy," shouted another.

"Knock the day-light through him," proposed a third; while a fourth party, more mercifully inclined, were for giving him a tithe-proctor's end, "clipping his ears, slitting his tongue, and burying him alive, jist to show the naburs he come by a nathural death."

"Give him a fair thrial any way," observed the first speaker, "an' let him be heerd in his own defence; an' spake up, man," added he, addressing the crest-fallen Major, "that's not the way ye be talkin' to the people, whin ye have the Peelers an' sogers at ye'er back; 'tis yoursilf crows purty loud too, whin ye'er sayted on the Binch up at Ballyvoyle dispensing jistice, that for all the world, is like the handle ov a can, all at one side,

an' begannys, Major," added the speaker, in a tone of mock humour, "if the nayburs spake thruth, that's always sure to be ye'er *own* side ov the questhun."

Here a roar of laughter attested how well this piece of witticism was appreciated by the auditory.

The culprit thought it a favourable moment for the hearing of his defence, and in a broken and nervous voice, declared his innocence of even in thought dispossessing his tenants at Knockanure, not to say, letting the land to any others, or raising the present rents; that it was his fullest intention to give the tenants, in possession, the land at the same rent they held it at; and, as to serving them with ejectments, it was a mere legal form, and after they gave up the peaceable possession, he would consider them as much his tenants as ever, and most willingly give them all new leases."

This was the substance of the Major's promises; after he had ended, his in-

terrogator exclaimed in an incredulous tone of voice,

"May be so, bud we'd like to have some other security beside your own; what would you think of gettin some of the gintlemen in the boat to pass their word for ye'er future good behaviour."

"It's more than any ov us would do," shouted Nick O' Brady, "but what do you require of any gentleman but his word?"

"He has broken it a hundred times," shouted a number of voices.

"Well, bind him over," was the response from the water, but not in his dutiful nephew's voice; and the Major inwardly registered a vow, to wreak his vengeance on the cargo in the boat, whenever his safety was secured, for the cruel suggestion that now subjected him to undergo the ordeal of an oath.

"Boys, which ov ye have a book," cried the principal speaker of the party; one was immediately produced, and the unfortunate Major, still on his knees, was exorcised,

" to spake the whole thruth an' nothing bud the thruth, or that id would be worse fur himself hereafter; fur that he'd get the death ov a thraytur—shot widout jidge or jury, an' that naither priest nor ministher, nor the pope ov Room himself id save him from their vingince, if he daare to break the black oath he was about to take."

The *exorcée* solemnly promised to fulfil it to the letter; and, with great formality, was called on to repeat the good intentions he had just stated, and after going through the formula, in a very faint voice, by way of codicil, was made to declare, " that he forthwith dismissed from his service Dan Wetherell, and would neither countenance nor protect him for the future, that Martin Sweeney's debt at the Loan Bank should be cancelled, as an act of justice to that individual,' and that henceforth, he (the Major,) should keep himself quiet—not to ride rough shod over the people ; but see justice done to the poor man, as well as to the rich."

To all this the gentleman on his knees unhesitatingly consented; and what would he not have assented to at that moment, kissing the book fervently, by way of ratification, and then was liberated, so far as being placed under the surveillance of two stout fellows, who mounted guard on his honour by presenting—what the Major's unsteady nerves at that moment converted into a blunderbuss—at either ear the butt end of two carmen's whips; while their shining brass ferules appeared, to his disordered imagination, as murderous engines designed by popular vengeance to blow him up; and thus suffering the tortures of a living death, he heard distinctly, and solemnly announced, to the meeting, by their leader—"that fur the sake ov some belonging to Major Power, they had granted him a long day, and that, if he attimpted, to break the oath he had just taken, to order his coffin; fur that id would be wantin' before the week was out."

"Dan Witherill, the *informer*, an' the

informer's son," was next called on to appear.

That personage was soon dragged into the circle his master had just occupied, forced down on his knees, whilst a shout of derision from all around, attested how few friends he had amongst the company assembled.

" He's thried, an' found guilty, long ago," cried several voices, " don't throuble ye'erselves thryin' him agin, there's more than a dozen here owes it to him fur his threachery, an' now give him his blood to dhrink to night, an' make no more ov killin' him than you would a mad dog, fur it's only jistice to the blessid ground we walk on, to rid it ov sich varmint."

Here a rush was made on Mr. Wetherell, that would soon have freed him from the horrors of suspense ; and ended in positive certainty, had not one of the party flung his assailants back, and a voice sounding marvellously like Nickey the Nurse's, cried out—

"Is it afore the ladies ye'd kill the likes ov him. Honour bright, boys, ye promised not to spill anny blood to-night, an' don't disgrace ye'erselves afore them that's looking at ye, from the wather; bud give the ould villin three ducks in the river, for the present; an' settle ye'er own account wid him, some other time; an' take that fat captain, that five ov ye arehouldin' down there, an' thrust him sthraight into the sthreet ov Ballyvoyle, jist to shew him his room is good company, and to clear the way fur his betthers; while I give a grain ov a lecthur here to the Major, whin I have him all to myself."

These several modes of dispensing *jistice* to the prisoners, were received with a shout of approbation. Mr. Wetherell was marched off to a neighbouring slip, a little below the bend of the river, and out of sight of the party in the boat; there, to receive his sentence; while Captain Grant cut a very laughable figure, trotted off at top speed, in the direction of his "country

quarters;" leaving the Major and his solitary companion in possession of the field.

As the footsteps of the receding parties died away, Nick O'Brady shouted to his uncle to knock the fellow down, and then jump into the river, and he'd save him. The Major evidently seemed repugnant to this active mode of joining his friends; and tried a conciliatory harangue upon his sentinel, whose face was entirely covered with black crepe; and, though unarmed, and somewhat below the middle size, seemed a strong junk of a fellow, shaking his companion about with something of the same license, a bear would a young kitten in his paw, and peremptorily demanded the Major's fire-arms; denial was vain, so out came a pair of detonators, with their caps off, for fear of accident, whilst his merciless tormentor transferred them to his own pocket, remarking—

"They wor mighty pretty keepsakes."

And commenced again jostling the little

man about. The voice of Frank Mandeville came from the water—

"Now's your time, Major, give him what you gave Bill Delaney in Chester; sure that fellow isn't your match, though you haven't a bed-post to knock him down; you that made a whole regiment run before you, ought to be able to give him enough of it."

A shout of laughter followed this, which increased the Major's mental and bodily sufferings nearly to madness; he called on the party in the boat by everything sacred and divine, individually and collectively, to come to his rescue; and declared, in tones of mingled terror and anguish, that every rib in his body was broken from the unmerciful pounding he was in the very act of receiving; whilst ever and anon he addressed his assailant in language that would admirably suit the three leading words of a humble petition; the next moment offering him, he knew not, and he cared not, what, to induce him to desist, from pommelling his unfortunate

bones. His wilful nephew, with Frank, and some of the officers, despite all decorum, laughed alternately at the Major's sufferings, and shouted words of encouragement to the fallen hero; the former vowing they could not believe a man of such prowess and valour, in "The Tipperary," could be worsted by such a *sprissawn*, as that in single combat.

"Come an' thry it ye'erself jintlemen," cried the Major's veiled foe, dropping the disguised voice he had hitherto spoken with. "May be the *sprissawn*, was a match for wan ov ye'erselves before now, an no mistake."

These words uttered in a voice familiar, to at least some of the party, had the effect of opening Mrs. O'Brady's eyes, in order to identify the speaker, the lady's tongue was loosed in a second.

"Nickey the Nurse, you'll catch it, hot and heavy, as soon as I reach Kilgroggy," uttered by the lady in a threatening voice, hoarse from rising passion, caused an in-

stantaneous diversion in the Major's favor, adding an impetus to his tormentor's heels, who fairly took the sod, never vouchsafing a look on those left behind, until he cleared a double ditch in true sporting style, leaving the Major to make the best of his way to the boat that was now rapidly approaching the bank, where he stood; as it neared he lost no time in throwing himself in exclaiming—

"A pretty business this, gentlemen, when the man that waited on me at dinner, attempts my life, before his own master and mistress. If martial law is'nt wanting in this country, with a vengeance, I'll say nothing."

"It's neither law, nor fair play," returned his nephew, "for my mother or you to say Nickey the Nurse was able to give you such a drubbing as you got just now."

"'Ill tell you my opinion, when we're at the other side," said his worthy uncle.

"But before we leave this side," interrupted Frank, "remember your faithful Dan is in the hands of the Rockites."

"And there let him remain," said his master. "For Heaven's sake row us across. I shall never consider myself safe until I have stone and mortar between me and those desperate ruffians."

"But the man is so detested amongst them, that they'll murder him," persevered Frank.

"And I'm sure I can't prevent them," returned the Major impatiently; "he was of great use to me, but it can't be helped, and what in the name of wonder are we waiting here for?"

"For me to land," said Nick O'Brady, coolly, "and any other person who doesn't care so much about their own safety as to take themselves off, while an unfortunate wretch is being murdered."

Then jumping from the boat, the officers prepared to accompany him; Nick prevented them, saying "that strangers interfering would exasperate the people."

Hurrying on in the direction the shouting still came from, he was soon out of

sight. The Major urged vehemently crossing the river, with as little delay as possible; and as the rowers stretched towards the opposite bank, commenced a hurried and exaggerated account of what he termed his miraculous escape, totally regardless of his child, who lay nearly insensible in the stern. Providence had mercifully spared her the misery of being sensible, during her father's degraded trial. She became unconscious almost at its commencement—saw and heard nothing of the heartless cowardice of the man, who had boasted so vauntingly but a few hours before, and that man, her own parent—none but a child, placed in similiar circumstances, can, at all, understand the agony of such a moment—fortunately, she was saved that *bitter* hour—saved the heavy woe of despising him, whom, the natural feelings of her own mind, and a Heavenly Father, had alike commanded her to honor. The weakest of her sex, the most timid woman that ever breathed, scorns the braggadocia and the craven; what then must

be the feelings of a noble nature, capable of appreciating all that was brave and generous ; they who exposed her to such a trial, neither understood nor cared to wound the feelings of such a daughter— and woe be to such, and their name is legion, who, for a moment of selfish gratification, can expose the weakness and mean shrinking of a parent, totally regardless of the dagger they are planting in the helpless breast of a sensitive and high-minded child; some such feeling as this was awakened in the breast of Colonel Saville as he leaned over the unconscious Agnes; the increasing moonlight rendering more distinct the beautiful outline of features, invested with a tenfold interest in his eyes, from the very consciousness that the fair, insensible being whose cheek now rested on his shoulder was suffering, at that moment, the bitter penalty, ever the lot of those, whose destiny is cast amongst the selfish and unfeeling ; the rude, heartless kindred that surrounded her, had exposed her gentle nature to the misery of

that hour, and, totally indifferent to the anguish she endured, abandoned her, overcome with mingled terror and sorrow, to the care and kindness of a stranger, fraught with how much danger to both, those only placed in a similar situation, can at all conceive. The deep crimson that mantled on the brow of Saville, the wild gushing thoughts that swept tumultuously through his breast, revealed, as if with the lightning's flash, that the time of indifference was past—he struggled not against the all-absorbing feeling that took possession of his soul ; but in its inmost shrine, did homage to the blind deity, whose power he had hitherto defied — whose shafts he had scorned ; the fair, young creature, whose utter helplessness he now supported, he felt, for the first time, was dearer, oh, how far dearer, to his subdued heart, than pride, fame, fortune; the pomp and circumstance of military glory; or aught else this world could offer in exchange; he felt, in its secret core, that his years, be they few or

many, must be past as that beloved one's protector, guide, companion, friend, or life was to him, henceforth, a blank.

What a world is within ourselves; how many unrevealed feelings sleep within the compass of the human breast, shrouded from the minutest self-examination, yet, springing into action when touched by the most trivial circumstance. On such occasions —the hand of a giant or a child can alike set in motion the 'pulses that throb,' and beings, in every way, so uncongenial to Saville, as the aunt and cousins of Agnes, were the first to discover to himself the secret passion, undreamed of and unsuspected, that had influenced his conduct for weeks before, unmolested, unquestioned, in the quiet possession of what, in the pride of manhood, he had deemed an invulnerable heart.

That night, as he resigned her to the care of Mrs. Power and Amy, what would he not have given to read, in the faint, fluttered voice that bade him good night,

similar feelings to his own ; but Saville was not a vain man, and up to his twenty-ninth year, he had lived a practical infidel to the tender passion; so with a timidity, unknown to men who have given and exchanged vows o'er and o'er again with every pretty woman they have met, he regarded the chances of awakening in the gentle heart of Agnes, an attachment as fervid, as devoted, as lasting as his own, doubtful, to say the least, and determined to conceal, like a miser's hoard, the story of his love, until he was fortunate enough to discover the lady sympathised in his feelings.

In the meantime, much to the surprise of his mistress and the Major, Nickey the Nurse's voice saluted their astonished ears, at the hall door of Drumgar, in answer to the summoning knock of the latter; and after the brief enquiry, "who's there?" with the characteristic response of the Major,

"A friend, you rascal, open the door," he presented himself to their bewildered gaze;

green jacket, buttons, and all, with a placid, self-approving smile beaming on the disk of his unmoved countenance, sufficient to acquit him, in any court of justice, of having taken the prominent part they had supposed Nickey played in the late transaction; besides his being actually at this moment at Drumgar, not to say anything of his quiescent looks, was *alibi* sufficient for an acquittal. Had he been mounted on Harkaway since the supposed Nickey had parted, from the Major, he could not have reached that gentleman's residence coming round by the bridge, in the space of time that had elapsed , and there was no other way of getting across the river except by swimming, and Nickey's whole appearance negatived his having "taken the water." His mistress, sorely puzzled at the mistake her ears had made, sought, by a close fire of cross-questioning, to elicit from the imperturbable Nickey something confirmatory of her own hearing powers, but she examined and cross-examined in vain.

Nickey clearly proved, and the night *Pathrol* could prove the same, that he was employed "drivin' the ould black horse, that, by the same token, cast a shoe, comin' down the hill of Knockdharrag undher the jauntin' car at the very same time he was suspected of night-walking. That he, Nickey never heerd the like before, bud 'twas a bad sign anny way to have his *fetch* seen so near twelve o'clock at night, fur Father O'Donnell, God rest his sowl, appeared in the same way to Anty Maher up at Kilmallogue three weeks afore his death, praise be to the blessid Vargin an' prepared her wid the extreme unction, the house all seen him come out ov the room, an' Anty hersilf would swear to her recaiving the last rites from his raverence, whin *bedad*, he was a *month's mine* twinty miles off saying mass at the same time; bud whin he heard it, he gave himsilf up for as good as gone, an' sure enough, afore three weeks, he was wakin' in the Chapel ov Ballycross. An' a *month's mine*, sayin' for

himself, soon afther, in his own padler, the cross atween us an' all harum," continued Nickey, devoutly, "from that day to this, I never like hearing of a *fetch* showing itself afther dark; moreover whin it begins discoorsin' and handlin' a body into the bargain."

This story of Father O Donnell was evidence conclusive in Nickey's favour; and proof positive to the speaker himself that his own end was drawing nigh; and as the feats his *fetch* performed on the Major's person were recounted by his mistress, he drew from them the edifyin' *morale*, "that sich things were sent for warnins, an' that, *beganneys*, he'd look to his ways fur the futhur; for that it wasn't fur nothin' that 'the cat winked with both eyes,' an' afther all his misthress saw, 'twas plainly foretould to him his time wouldn't be long in id; so he'd make hay while the sun was shinin' an' attind to his dhuties from that day out."

With the vow of amendment upon him, Nickey retired, and his master soon after made his appearance, followed by the rescued sergeant—a frightened Neptune—dripping, but not from the briny wave, a fresh water bath having reduced him to his present deplorable condition ; however far voluntary immersion may go to soothe the nervous system, we much doubt the efficacy of a compulsory hydropathic plunge; on the present occasion, it certainly shed no calming influence on the vindictive sergeant; but on the contrary roused the worst feelings of a bad nature, into a fiend-like thirst for vengeance, to be satisfied only with the utter ruin and annihilation of the objects of its malevolent hate.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MEEHILL.

THE harvest had yielded to the sickle. The joyous laugh of the embrowned peasant girl rang right merrily as her day of toil ended; the last ledge of the field cut; the last sheaf bound—nought but *stooking* now remained to make a *clane* finish of the ten acre field of Paddy Dooly, a farmer well to do on the lands of Knockanure, who now with much pride and pleasure, with wife and friends, headed the *meehill*, who came that morning from far and near to shew respect for Paddy, in cutting down his corn, in one day ; all now lent a hand to

the *stooking*, from the *boccagh* who had come after his perquisites, the *lavins* of the dinner, to the master of the field himself, or a far greater personage, Mr. Mac Carthy, the village school-master; none were idle, save the blind fiddler, if he could be called so, who played with might and main as the work went on; and short work they made of it sure enough, for besides the actual force employed, many were the supernumeraries pressed into the service; scarcely a house on the townland that had not its representative there, to shew "*respict*" to Misther Dooly. The very nature of the work permitted a vast number and variety of assistants. The services of none were despised—the disbanded urchins from Mr. MacCarthy's seminary, let loose for a *half-day*, out of respect to the *Meehill*, were as busy, and as uproarious, as the best man amongst them, whilst *stooking*. And why not? It was a general holiday, and all felt its influence—all felt they were doing a *turn* to a kind neighbour; and one that amidst full and plenty,

never forgot those that had nothing to spare ; and loud was the laugh, and light were the hearts that had toiled all day without fee or reward, in his service. And now the work was done, and the master's eye rested with honest pride on the golden store that had been secured in one day, by the good-will of his neighbours; to *trate* them as they deserved, was next his pleasing duty ; and a busy and important man he looked, as he headed 'the boys and girls,' for in Ireland that appellation applies to all ages, while the blind fiddler brought up the rear of the merry party, playing his very best. The boys whooped, the girls sung and laughed by turns, and all shouted for *a' doore* as they entered the bawn. In no time one was off the hinges, placed on four solid stones, so as to elevate it a foot from theground. And Jim Sullivan, a *clane* boy, and a *nate* dancer, as ever stood on a floor, with a hop, step, and leap, accompanied with a whoop, sending his *caubeen* flying into mid air at the same time, dis-

persed the crowd around him, and reached the centre of attraction, *videlicet*, the door. No pet *Danseuse* of a London season was ever more encouragingly cheered than Jim; and to do him justice, none ever made their *debut* with more trustfulness in his own powers. The hornpipe was ended; another and another succeeded. The critique and repeated encore of the lookers on would have sadly puzzled an opera audience, and bewildered the followers of Taglioni and Celeste, yet their taste was not a whit less fastidious, or their admiration less sincere.

"More power to ye'er elbow, Jim. Thry it again. You'r the boy that id take the *shine* out ov the best ov um. What a power ov steps is in him; an' his feet playing the tchune all the time. Wan id know the music by their smack against the boords, iv the fiddle never was in id. Anny way, Jim, you're intitled to the best partner in the place. Mary Devaan, where are ye hidin' yourself? Has n't he fairly airn'd you fur the next dance, wid steps that id

turn on a threncher? Come, make ye'er curtsey, *alanna*, the girls are dyin to ax th' other boys, and waitin fur ye to take the lade—the barn floore's swept, an' all fur ye."

Thus publicly called on, Mary advanced with her light flowing hair smoothed, her handkerchief adjusted, and her apron tightened; slight but not unbecoming arrangements of her toilette, after the laborious exertion of binding during the heat and brunt of the day, after three of the ablest reapers in the field ; and now, with a suppressed sparkle in the eye, a sly, conscious, yet coquettish expression in her blooming face, she dropped her curtsey to the performer on the door, with "I dance to ye, Jim Sullivan," and the next moment the young couple were footing it on the barn floor, with a springy elasticity of step and happy *enjouement* of countenance, to be met with no where, but in Ireland, after a day of unceasing toil. The other girls were no way slow in following her exam-

ple, asking their respective partners after the same fashion; for though *a solo exhibition* of any of the fair sex is looked on as a disgrace amongst the peasantry, yet etiquette prescribes that the lady must be the wooer, as far as the dance is concerned. Couple succeeded couple; each one that retired from the stage dropping a small coin into the old hat, held by the little raggetty boy that always accompanied the blind fidler, whose hearing power was sharpened either by much use, or what is frequently the case, in the deprivation of one sense, the other becomes more acute, so that the chink of the coin announced its value to him, for whom it was intended, before it was whispered in his ear, by the urchin at his side. Then came "the givin's out," and all were unanimous in their praise and blessing of Paddy Dooly's mode of entertainment.

"A dacent man an' no churl," was heard at all sides, and as Paddy "sarved the company," with a look of deep responsi-

bility on his brow, lest any might be overlooked, hearty and many were the commendations passed on him ; and his "a good warrant he is, an' kind faather fur him, an *bedad*, we nivir knew a Dooly, wid their heart in id yet," met his ears, and what so sweet to an Irish ear, as the praise of their race. What was said of Paddy's own generosity, no doubt was gratifying to his spirit ; but when they spoke of his father, and "*them that come afore him*," he only thought of his own inferiority in feeding the hungry and relieving the distressed; and as if struck by a sudden thought, made a hasty exit from the barn, to seek his helpmate, within doors; here sat Mrs. Dooly, in what may be termed the *dais* of an Irish farm-house, known by the expressive appellation of "*the room*," a place of confidence and retirement, never used but on solemn and state occasions, and then only entered by visitors, whose rank and respectability are considered in no way derogatory to the apartment; on the present occasion

it shone out in its best and bravest; the floor freshly sanded, the substantial oak chairs and tables, polished so as to reflect the *bouquet* of meadow sweet and cabbage roses that sprang out of a bed of moss, in the well scoured grate; the walls decorated with lively colored prints of saint and sinner; the *chef d'œuvre*, of the mural embellishment, being an ancient piece of needle work, executed by some industrious gentlewomen of the Mac.Carthy More race, nearly a century before; and handed down to its present mistress, by her maternal grandmother, who was a follower of the *ould* family—an heir loom to be prized and valued by all future generations; a friendly pane of glass neatly framed, at once revealed its beauties, and prerserved their lustre; and the Saxon black letter, and Roman alphabets were still as vivid and as instructive to the tyro in marking, as when first traced by the fair *artiste* a century before. Modern invention, embodied in a bottle of marking-ink, was as unknown to Mrs. Dooly, or her

visiting acquaintance, as the political economy, patronised by the man in the moon, so that up to the time we write of, the *sampler* enjoyed a celebrity and utility, no way impaired by the knowledge that such a thing as a substitute could find a place, even in the boldest imagination; far less in a country shop; nor we much doubt could the two doves pecking at ripe cherries, that stood in *alto-relievo,* at its base, ever be rivalled in Mrs. Dooly's estimation, by the most elaborate piece of Berlin work that exercised, for days, weeks, and months, the fingers, head, and heart of a modern fine lady.

"Nelly, *avourneen,* I don't wish to be afthur disturbin' ye," was Paddy's address to his spouse, after drawing her aside; "but I came to remind you ov the poor desolate crathur, down in the quarry field, afeer'd she'd be overlooked in the *reeraw* this evening."

"Thrue for ye, Paddy; but no fear ov that same, an' Misther Mac.Carthy is afther

tellin' me, that it's all up wid little Mainy; she was lyin' as good as dead whin he left her poor disthracted mother, comin' up here watchin' her, an' signs on she'll never pass the night, an' more's the pity; fur she was the raal beauty, an' the darlin' ov her poor faather's heart."

"Bad luck to them that dhruv um into sickness an' hardship," was Paddy's response, as he drew a chair, and filled from the huge jug a bumper of the *native,* brewed into *stiff* punch by the skilful hands of Mrs. Dooly.

"I dhrink to ye'er toast, Misther Dooly, an' now I'll give ye wan in return—Here's confusion to Power, an' may the Knockannre tenants give him his blood to dhrink before they give up right and title to their lands."

Mac.Carthy's toast was duly honoured, and, as the punch told, deep and loud were the exercrations bestowed on the landlord of Knockanure.

"I tell ye, man alive," cried Mac

Carthy, in answer to a cottier farmer on the town-land, who seemed to rely on the Major's exhorted oath for his own fixity of tenure, " he'll keep it to the first ov November, an' not a day longer—arn't ye all sarved long ago? an' what is he waitin' for but the gale day to level the houses over ye'er heads! Isn't the sogers up at Ballyvoyle ready to back him—ain't he an' the Sheriff for manny a day as thick as hand an' glove; an' do ye think the man that sent Dan Witherill to put his own pistols in the thatch ov an honest man's house, would stick at the thrifle ov an oath to beggar every woman's son ov ye, an' put cash in his own fob into the bargain."

Mr. Mac.Carthy's reasoning was correct; the oath administered to the Major was not *selon le régle*, nor had he at any time contemplated fulfilling it, or altering his original intentions respecting the Knockanure tenantry; their doom was fixed, as far as his own will was concerned, and many a time and oft, had he revelled

in the thought of their expulsion, and already in imagination had grown green crops —nay, fattened bullocks on the land that hitherto had been the home-stay, the support of a people whose *all* depended, at the expiration of their leases, on the will of an arbitrary landlord.

We now return to Corny Mac.Carthy; after the conference had broken up, with hasty strides he sought the quarry field, alluded to by Dooly; a harvest moon partially revealed the deep passions that, at this still, calm hour, lit up his woe worn countenance; his features never could be said to be in repose, but now each was convulsed by strong emotion; his eyes gleamed wildly, as he watched the flitting clouds, passing o'er the moon's disc, throwing his path, this moment, into deep shade, the next leaving it clear as the noon day.

"'Twill be bright enough with the people, after the black deed is done," he muttered to himself, assimilating, as it were, his own thoughts to the luminary above

him. "Light they'll never have until it's dark with him, the black villin, an' dark enough he made id, to you, Biddy Sweeney," he murmured, as his eye rested on the kiln, in the eye of which he himself, with the assistance of Jim Sullivan, had erected a temporary shed to shelter her and her children, when that poor man's scourge—typhus fever—laid its heavy grasp on those helpless beings, after being driven from their own roof-tree by the unrelenting Major. And where was the wretched husband and father? a wandering outcast, hiding in bog and mountain, yet ever hovering near the beings so dear to him, without being able to mitigate their sufferings or distress, carrying on a half-famished existence, in the neighbourhood of those beloved ones, rather than move to a distant quarter where subsistence might be earned, and the wife and children of his bosom left to brave the horrors of sickness and of poverty by themselves. With but slight chance of even seeing these miserable ob-

jects of his affection, did Martin Sweeney remain in a neighbourhood where danger beset his path at every turn ; but the wretched man thought not of himself—to hear each, night he stole from his hiding-place, from some kind hearted neighbour, that his little family still lived, more than atoned for all the privations he underwent ; and oh, how many were endured in those few short weeks, since Major Power's pistols were drawn out of the thatch of Martin Sweeney's cabin by Sergeant Wetherell ; how they came there—a few days after they were surrendered by the Major to Nickey the Nurse's *fetch*—the owner and the finder must account ; the victim of having unconsciously entertained, on the house-top of his domicile, such warlike visitors, was in a happy state of ignorance respecting even their existence at the very moment they were discovered to be his out-door guests, nor did he remember even making their acquaintance, when His or Her Majesty's (as it may be) consta-

bulary proclaimed him a royal prisoner. The hospitality of his cabin's thatch, however, unknowingly to the proprietor, extended to these missiles, was, nevertheless, proof positive of his guilt; nor did Martin, for one moment, contemplate the possibility of escaping by legal means; though he rested his best hopes on the use he might make of his *legs* before he was lodged in the next bridewell, to be forwarded, with a military escort, to Clonmel; escape from thence he regarded hopeless, as well as in his transit thither; *to do the peelers* then was his only chance.

Vainly should we attempt describing the anguish of Biddy on this occasion, nor the uproar and confusion which ensued, when half a dozen neighbouring women, that had come to console her in this affliction, insisted on placing a young Sweeney in the arms of either policeman, and the infant of the family in that of Sergeant Wetherell, asking them all the time, "would they have the hard heart to rob *sich*

childre ov their faather, fur the sake ov the Major's *arums?*"

The sergeant, as well as his escort, stoutly resisted this *depot* of arms in theirs; but the ladies were vehement, and the hint was no way lost on the prisoner. One kiss of agony imprinted on Biddy's cheek, and the next moment, Martin Sweeney cleared the garden hedge, and distanced his pursuers by a field; but escape was still doubtful; in this very field, lay *perdu*, a party of police, commanded by the cautious Major, lest anything like a rescue might be attempted. The apparition of a man, flying past them, brought them to their legs as well as to their arms, and, as the Sergeant and their comrades followed in hot pursuit, the younger and more active of the party joined the chase, whilst the Major roared, at the top of his voice—"To shoot Sweeney through the heart, and that every man amongst them would be reported, and broke, if they did

not bring him back dead or alive before night."

The first of these orders, the foremost men could not well comply with; inasmuch as, to enable them to keep the pace, they had dropped their pieces at the first start, and the rear-rank men had some compunction in firing after the prisoner, where there was all but a certainty of their balls lodging in their comrades' backs; but for the credit of the force be it recorded, that on this occasion they strained every nerve to meet the wishes of their superior nor shall we stop to enquire whether the threat of their own dismissal had anything to do with the activity of their heels, or that laudable wish, inherent in every policeman, to be distinguished as a captor, no matter how convinced he may be of the innocence of the captive, but "Sing the dangers of the chase," which now amounted to fearful odds against Sweeney. Piece by piece was each article of dress flung off by the hunted man, an advantage the pursuers in

their closely buttoned jackets, and tightly laced boots could not avail themselves of; still there were active men amongst them, better fed, though not better taught—practice being Martin's school-master—and a sheet might have covered the the three foremost of the party, and the object of their pursuit in the last field which skirted a wide, straggling bog, where some dozen men and women were employed with *slanes* cutting turf. A regular *rasper*, to use a sporting phrase, lay between him and them; a high, double-breasted, ditch, broad dyke, filled with bog water, was regarded by Biddy Sweeney from the top of a neighbouring hill, with an intensity of anguish that arrested all power of moving, as her breathless husband kept scarcely a yard a head of his pursuers; no words came to her parted, and parched lip, but there was a fearful consciousness in her strained eye, and the dew of death lay clammy on her pallid brow, as she watched his flagging pace towards the

goal of liberty or death. The last spring was to be taken, and exhausted nature shrank from the effort, but freedom lay before him, the loving eye of a fond wife was on him, and *he knew it*—mind over matter proved victorious.

"Mother of Heaven, save him!" was Biddy's scream of agony, as her fingers described a cross, in vacant space, before the glazed eyes that refused to witness that husband in the hands of an enemy —a prisoner and a felon. When she dared look again, her wild laugh told he was free; the number of the pursued now increased to some five or six, all divested of hat, coat, and waistcoat, *sans* hose, or brogue, with naught but small clothes and shirt to impede the freedom of their action. In this race of cross-purposes; some were caught, but only to laugh at their captors and enquire—"why they were followed for nothing at all;" whilst others led the fresh police, that presently came up, a will-o-the wisp dance

that allowed the real Simon Pure time to escape.

The *Peelers* were foiled, and the turf-cutters were gratified by the success of their manœuvre; they cared not what crime Sweeney might either be charged with, or guilty of, they sought only to baffle the "powers that be;" and this feeling, so universal in Ireland, is acted on, almost invariably by the people. To know that a man has rendered himself obnoxious to the laws, is a sure claim for protection and succour, certain to be responded to, where even the nature of his crime, nay, his very name, is unknown.

Would that "those in authority" in the days we write of, condescended an enquiry into the origin of this feeling, as well as traced its fatal effects on the social condition of their country—its blood-stains would then have been unrecorded; its crimes, as well as its misrule unheralded throughout civilized Europe. Surely, confidence in those who administer the laws, induces

respect for the law itself, and we trust the time will come, nay, now is, when the axe shall be laid to the root of the evil, and this noxious tree of monster growth, whose dark shadow lay heavily on the land, will be uplifted by the giant grasp of even-handed justice.

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